

THE
HOLY FAST
OF
LENT

Defended against all its
PROPHANERS:

OR,

A Discourse, shewing that *Lent - Fast*
was first taught the World by the Apostles, as
Dr. *Gunning*, now Bishop of *Ely* Learnedly proved in a
Sermon Printed by him in the year, 1662. by his Ma-
jesties special Command. Together with a Practical Di-
rection how to *FAST*.

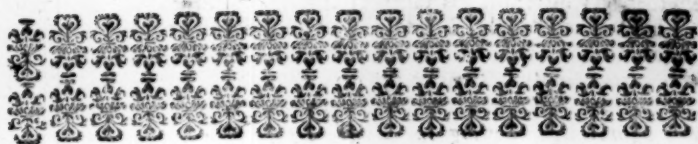
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THE
HOLY FAST
OF
LENT

Defended against its PROFANERS.



O go about to prove that the *Holy Fast* of *Lent* was first taught the World by the Apostles of our Lord Jesus, I know very well, is, as they say, *Actum agere*, to do what has been done; and that very efficaciously fifteen years agoe, by Dr. *Gunning*, now Bishop of *Ely*, in his Elaborate and useful Treatise on this Subject; Printed by his Majesties special Command, in the year 1662. And I perswade my self, had the rest of the Clergy taken but a quarter of the pains in Reading and Studying that Rational Discourse, which the Learned Author did in compiling of it, they would have been so well satisfied of the great benefit of Religious Fasting in general; as also that the first Planters of Christianity were the first Institutors of the Lent-Fast in particular; that they would not have dared, but to have Religiously observed it themselves, & to have taught the like Observation to their

Parishoners in their respective Districts. But it being too too manifest, that very little notice is taken of that Sacred Penitential time, either by Priest or People, I resolved to press its observation not only by renewing my Lord of Ely's Arguments; but also by superadding some particular Reflections of my own.

Omnipotent Jesus, who wrought so many Miracles of Love when you were upon Earth, Curing the Blind, Deaf, and Dumb; now from Heaven work upon me: a miracle of Justice, and Witherr my hand, or strike me Blind, if I be about to write any thing in favour of Superstition or Will-worship: But if I design nothing, but to persuade a practice which was taught the World, either by your Blessed Self, or your Holy Apostles, Bless me according to your great mercy, and bless my poor Labours to all those, into whose hands they shall come.

I confess it was my Unhappiness to be Educated in *Puritanism*, or *Non-Conformity*, and to look upon the keeping of Lent as a fruitless Superstition: But thanks be to Almighty God, I now dare no more eat Flesh in Lent, than I dared to Work upon a *Lords Day*, when I was a *Non-Conformist*. But how was this strange Change wrought in me? I'll tell you: Reading in one of Bishop Andrews his Sermons upon *Ash-Wednesday*, how we were to take notice, that before Popery was hatch'd, St. Hierom taught the keeping of Lent was an Apostolical Tradition, &c. Hereupon, I began to reason with my self: If the Apostles ordained the keeping of Lent, why should not I keep it? And I confess, sitting my self to the keeping of it; before *Easter* I was so satisfied of the great benefit of Religious Fasting, that one might as soon have persuaded me, that Honey was not sweet, as that Fasting was not strangely profitable to the Soul, or that Lent-Fast had any thing of Superstition in it: So true did I find those words of our Blessed Saviour, *John 7 17. If any one will do his, that is, Gods Will; he shall know concerning my Doctrine, whether it be from God, or I speak from my self.*

My dearest friends, would you indeed gladly be satisfied, whether Fasting in Lent be *Superstition* or no? Set your selves in a Christian manner to Fast that Holy Time, and you shall know whether such a practice be from God, or a human Invention? That is, Content your selves every day in Lent with onely one temperate Meal, of less Savoury and less Nourishing Vi&uals; not out of any Superstitious intention, as if one Meat were more unclean than another, but out of a Pious design to humble your selves before God for your sins, judging your selves unworthy of the courtest fair, and the smallest quantity,

quantity ; judging your selves, that you may not be judged of our Lord. Take the Rod into your own hand, and gently Chastise your selves here, to prevent the more severe Animadversion of your Lord hereafter ; Being well assured that the All-merciful Jesus will not permit the same faults to be punished twice. If you punish your selves for them in this World, He'll not punish you for them in the other ; provided your exterior Humiliation be accompanied with a hearty interior repentant sorrow. It is not imaginable what difficulty our proud Nature makes to condemn it self, though never so deservedly : To acknowledge for example a practice to be Holy and Good, which for many years we have totally neglected as Superstitious, and to no purpose. A little experimental knowledge of the great Spiritual benefit of Religious Christian Fasting, would strangely conduce to open our Eyes to see the force of such Arguments, as prove Lent-Fast to be Apostolical. Had we a little tasted how good it is for the Soul, to afflict the Body with Fasting, we should easily be persuaded to see a pious observation of Lent was well worthy the Institution of the Apostles, and well worthy our Blessed Lords Fasting forty days, to animate us thereunto. And the truth is, In this latter Age, amongst too many Christians, little more than the name of Fasting being retained, the thing it self, according to the Primitive practice, being in a manner lost ; no wonder vast multitudes should easily be persuaded to deem Lent an useless Superstitious Ceremony. Having put away a good Conscience, as to a Religious Observation of that Holy Time ; no wonder if we made Shipwreck of our Faith, of its Apostolical Institution. Too too many Christians in Lent, and upon other Fasting-days, giving themselves all liberty of drinking Wines, and other strong Liquors, both at Meals and betwixt Meals, and stuffing themselves plentifully, at Noon, with all sorts of Fish and other Viands, which their Purfes could reach, provided they were not Flesh ; and pampering Nature again in the Evening with a large proportion of solid Sustenance, and with whatsoever quantity of strong drink they please ; no wonder if such Fasters as these were easily convinced, such a Lent-Fast as this was never appointed by the Holy Apostles of our Lord Jesus. Is this the Fast our B. Saviour excused his Disciples from, as above their spiritual strength, till such time as they should have received the Holy Ghost after his departure ? Is this the Fast that has a power to cast out Devils ; to obtain the Holy Ghost for our selves or others ; to appease God All-mighties Anger towards a particular Person, City, or Country ? Would Nineveh,

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think you, have escaped the Destruction which *Jonas*, in the Name of Almighty - God threatned it with, had its King Proclaimed and practised such a Fast as this? Might he not rather justly have feared, for such a damnable Hypocrisie of pretending to humble himself, by Fasting, when he did nothing less; that he and his people, instead of within forty days, within twenty should have been utterly destroyed.

I remember to have read, how that the Primitive Christians, to excite in their souls a more lively sense and apprehension of our B. Saviours humble Birth, and painful Death, were wont often to go to *Bethlehem* and Mount *Calvary*, there to make their Prayers and Meditations; reflecting, and no doubt with a singular profit to their Souls, that there their dear Redeemer was humbly born, and here the same Redeemer pitiously died for them. But the Devil envying these good Christians, their so profitable Devotions, by a cunning device, thus thought to deterre them from them: He suggested to the Pagans, to set up the Statue of *Adonis* in the Stall of *Bethlehem*, and the Statue of *Venus* on the Mount of *Calvary*, so that the Devout Christians could not now go either to the one place or the other, to help their Religious Piety, without seeming superstitiously to worship *Venus* and *Adonis*. A lively representation me-thinks this, of the notorious abuse the same Devil has put upon us Christians in our yearly Observations of *Christmas*, in memory of our Saviours Birth, and weekly Observation of *Friday*, in memory of his Death. The Primitive Christians weekly observed the day of our Lords bitter Death and Passion, afflicting their Souls for their sins with penitential sorrow, and their bodies with rigorous Fasting, both the quantity and quality of their Diet, rather expelling Death than cherrishing Life. The same first Christians yearly observed the time of their Lords Nativity, but so Religiously, as it was manifest their study was to fatten their souls with devout Meditations, & not to pamper their bodies with delicious fair: The Devil envying the Church of Christ, so great profit, from the pious observation of these Holy Times, he suggests to sensual Libertines so to prophane the Holy Time of *Christmas*, with excessive Rioting, that none could profess to keep it without playing the Debauche; and so to abuse the Religious Fast of *Friday*, and other times of Christian Abstinence by an intolerable excess in all sorts of Fish and Wine, and dainty Comfitures, that none could pretend to observe them without playing the Hypocrites, professing to afflict their bodies with Aultere Fasting, when they pampered them by delicate

delicate Feasting. But what Remedy? Abandon the profane Abuse, and recall the first Pious use. Demolish the Statues of *Venus* and *Adonis*, but help your Devotions still by Visiting the Sanctified places of our Lords Birth and Passion.

Though you must give me leave to tell you, that I fear, were the matter well examin'd, it would be found that not others uncouth, exotick manner of Fasting, but our own Inordinate desire of eating when we will, what we will, and as much as we will; that is of not Fasting at all, is the true cause of our Cavilling at the Holy Fast of Lent, and other times of Abstinence. Let it be. Some, who pretend to Fast, do nothing less, abstaining indeed from Flesh, but giving scope to their Sensuality in other things: But they say, *Carpere vel noli, vel meliora facere*. Either do not carp at our Fasting, or else Fast more strictly your selves. And those who are so forward in Reproaching to their Neighbours their Mock-fasts, I fear if they were obliged to Fast, would find but difficulty enough, even to fast so largely, as they do, whose Fastings they carve at. And though indeed you may find too too many Libertines, who study by all means possible to avoyd the difficulty of Church-Fasts, by excessive Drinking, and intemperance in Meats not prohibited; yet those of a better Conscience, though they come far short of the rigor of the Primitive Christians in their Abstinence, yet do so Fast, as their fasting days, are days of real Mortification unto them. As for Libertines, its rather to be wondered they will deny themselves, even to abstain from Flesh, than that they take the liberty they do upon Fasting-days. Do not so wholly fix your Eyes upon the Cockle, as you take no notice at all of the good Corn.

But to the Point undertaken to be proved. How may one, who with his soul, desires nothing more than to observe most Religiously all Apostolical Ordinations, be satisfied that the Holy Apostles of our Lord Jesus ordained the Quadragesimal Fast of Lent as a time of Abstinence and Humiliation for all Christians? Let him thoroughly satisfie himself, that Fasting is a Christian duty, and has a singular force to cast out the Devil to obtain the Holy Ghost, to appease the Almighty just Anger, and which shall have a singular reward in Heaven. And moreover, let him reflect, if any Credit be to be given to the Old and New Scripture, and to Ecclesiastical History, the more eminent any one has been for Piety and Sanctity, the more exemplar have they been for Fasting and Abstinence. *Moses, Elias, Daniel, Ju-*
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diab, Anne, great *Fasters* under the old Law; *St. John Baptist*, our Blessed Saviour, *St. Mary Magdalen*, and all the Apostles under the Gospel. *St. Paul* testifies of himself, that he *Fasted* often; Our B. Saviour assures us concerning all his Disciples, that when he was taken from them, they should *Fast*. To say nothing of our *Basils*, *Hieroms*, and *August'n's*, &c. whose *Fasts* were very frequent and very rigorous, and yet we cannot, without injury to the Apostolical Colledge, surmise, that those later Fathers of Christs Church, should surpass either in Piety or Abstinence, the first Planters of Christianity. By which it is evident to every Christian Man, that *Fasting* in general is very well becoming every good Christian; and that he hardly deserves the name of a Christian, who wanting neither health nor strength, yet *Fasts* not at all. And indeed, if we examin the matter well, we shall find that one great end of our Lord Jesus, His coming into the World, was to save us from our sins, by Teaching, by his Doctrin, and by enabling us by his Example, and other graci-ous Assistances, fervourously to practise the propitiatory Humiliation of *Fasting*. Our All-wise Mediator, understanding very well, that could he but bring us heartily to Repent us of our sins, and to express the sincerity of our interior Contrition by exterior Humiliation or *Fasting*; such was the genius of his Eternal Father, that he could not but pardon us, how great, or how many soever our sins might be: But on the contrary, we refusing to Repent, and that even in Sack-cloath and Ashes, that is, with such a Repentance as shows it self by some exterior acts or other, no Prayers, no Tears, no Blood, no Death of his could possibly obtain our pardon, except we would Repent, Perish we must, and that Eternally.

But what conduces this to perswade *Lent-Fast*, was appointed by the Apostles? Very much. For we having hence, that *Fasting* is a necessary Christian duty, and strangely conducing to save the World from sin, it evidently follows, it was well worthy the Apostles, the better to secure so useful a practice, to determin certain days every year, in which all Christians should be obliged to humble themselves by Abstinence, as to the quantity and quality of their Food; they knowing very well by the Uaſſion of the Holy Ghost, what we know by too sad experience, that the generality of the people being left to Fast when they pleased, would please to Fast seldom or never at all. Nay moreover, it follows hence, that the Institution of set-days of Abstinence was not only well worthy of the Apostles, but also that it cannot well be understood how they could be faithful to their charge
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of the Souls of the whole World, and neglect by the proviso of such an Ordination, to propagate to all Generations an Universal practice of *Fasting* amongst Christians. For, though it were granted that the Primitive Christians were so fervorous both in Piety to God, and in Mortification to themselves, as they neither stood in need of set Holy-days to invite them to their Prayers, nor of set *Fasts* to invite them to Penitential works. Every day was a Lords day to them, so long and frequent were their devout Prayers, and other spiritual Exercises; the whole year was one continued *Lent* unto them, so rigid was their daily Abstinence. Although, I say, all this were granted to the Honour of the Primitive Christian fervor; yet it lying upon the Apostles to secure all Christian practices, not only for their own days, but to all Generations, as much as in them lay; and they foreseeing by the light of the Holy Ghost, how apt tepid Posterity would be to excuse themselves from all obligation of the hard and troublesome duty of *Fasting* upon any set-times, had they been left free to *Fast* when and how they pleased; this, I say the H. Apostles foreseeing, their very Office seems to have obliged them from the beginning to ordain not only certain Festival days, but certain *Fasting* days also, lest after-Generations should say, Our Ancestors went to Heaven without *Fasting-Lent*, or other set *Fasts*, and why may not we? And indeed, had not the Holy and long *Fast* of Lent been instituted by the first planters of Christianity over all the World, Provincial, or General Councils would have found it too hard a task to have obliged all Christian Countrys to an observation so repugnant to the natural inclination of Man-kind. And this consideration alone does not a little encline me to believe that the Apostles of our Lord Jesus did actually, and indeed ordain the Christian *Lent-Fast*. For, is it a likely Story that the Apostles and Primitive Christians *Fasted* as seldom, and in such a manner as our *Non Conformists* do, only deferring their good Flesh-meal till three a Clock in the Afternoon for five or six times a year: But when Christians in after-Ages grew cold in all Christian exercises, they fell to Abstinence from flesh, contenting themselves with less nourishing, and less savory Viands towards the Evening, three days every Quarter, and forty days every Year, besides the Eves of several Festivities, and two days of Abstinence every week? Is this, I say, a likely story? Or is it not rather much more likely that the Holy Apostles, all over the World, taught their first Converts, both by their Example and Doctrine to *Fast* very often, and very strictly? but after-Ages growing more languid, as in

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all Christian exercises, so especially in *Fasting*, as hardest and most contradictory to flesh and blood; at length they came to *Fast* so remissly, even upon days of the very Apostles Ordination, that they added to one full Meal about Noon, a Collation at Night, and that such a one too, as would hardly have been allowed a Primitive Christian Faster for his whole dayes Refection? I desire the impartial Reader would be pleased to consider which of these two is the more likely story, and to encline accordingly towards the belief of Lent being an Apostolical Ordination. Or did the Primitive Christians *Fast* indeed very often, and very strictly, urged hereunto by their extraordinary fervor, but without any extrinsecal Law obliging them hereunto, upon any set-days or times; but in after-Generations, the Primitive inward fervor being lost, did Christians generally *Fast* seldom, and very remissly; which their Pastors observing, and watching for their souls good: Did they hereupon Ordain Lent, and other *Fasting* days as an extrinsecal help to recover in their languishing Flock the Primitive Christian practice of *Fasting*? According to that of the Apostle, *The Law is not made for the Just Man, but for the Unjust*, 1 Tim. 1. 8. This might not without some probability be surmized, were it not contrary to all Ecclesiastical History, which makes mention of Lent in the most Primitive times, as I shall say hereafter.

But Efficaciously to prove the holy *Fast* of Lent was taught the Christian world by the Apostles of our B. Saviour. I confess I was not present when St. *Peter*, or S. *Paul*, or any other of the Apostles Preached to their first Converts the observation of Lent. Neither were you present, I believe, when S. *Paul* writ his Epistle to the *Romans*; and yet I perswade my self, you think you are able to satisfy any reasonable man that he did write it. Then why may not I be able also, to prove satisfactorily that the holy Apostles did teach the Observation of Lent, though I was not present at any of their Sermons or Exhortations to that purpose? Or perhaps, will you say, You matter not who writ the Epistle to the *Romans*. Having diligently Read and perused it, you fear not with all confidence to aver, who-soever writ this Letter, I am sure the Holy Ghost Indired it: I know it by its very stile, and its other intrinsecal Vertues, there's a Divine Character stamp'd upon it, by which I clearly distinguish it from all human Writings; and this suffices me, to make me receive it as a rule of my Faith and Manners. But this would be small satisfaction to a Pagan, who doubts of the Divine Authority of that holy Epistle, unless

lest you could make him also discern that Sacred Impress, which you say you so clearly distinguish; take heed you do not mistake. 'Tis Education I fear has made both you and me bear that Reverence we do to that and whatsoever else Portion of holy Writ we receive. Had we been Educated in Judaism, in all likelihood we should have as little regarded the New Testament, as we do now Mahomets Alcaron. I could tell you also, that I know by the nature of Lent it self, it must be Instituted and first taught by Missionants sent from Heaven, and enumerating the singular benefits that accrue to a devout soul, Religiously observing of it; I could moreover make even you, or any other *Non-observer* of it, as well as my self see it must needs at first come from a good Spirit, that wished Man-kind well, for that it so strangely conduces to the perfecting of human Nature, and to the adorning of it with many excellent Vertues. For example: If I *Fast* to afflict and humble my self before God Almighty for my sins, my *Fasting* is an act of Repentance. If I eat less my self, that I may have the more to give to those that are in Necessity, my *Fast* is an act of Charity. If I *Fast* the better to dispose my self for Prayer, 'tis an act of Religious Devotion. If I *Fast*, judging my self not worthy of any Delicacies, nor of my fill of even the coarsest Fare, 'tis an act of Humility, and disposes my soul moreover as little to affect fine Cloaths or stately Dwellings, as I do good Victuals; and consequently moderates my desires of Money and Riches, which are not desirable by corrupt Nature, but for these or such like uses. If I *Fast*, that I may be better able to pay my Debts, or provide my Children Portitions, 'tis an act of Justice and Christian paternal Piety. If to moderate my inordinate Appetite of Meat and Drink, 'tis an act of Temperance. In fine, 'tis hard to name a Virtue which *Fasting* does not strangely help to procure, maintain, and encrease. And after all this, can either Pagan or Christian deny the holy *Fast of Lent* to have a Divine Character stamp'd upon it? and must it be still stigmatized with the ignominious brand of *Superstition* and *Will worship*?

But how do I know assuredly the Apostles of our B. Saviour taught the Primitive Christians to *Fast in Lent*? Am I able to produce a grand Jury of so many Venerable old Men, who have been miraculously kept alive ever since, and are ready to avouch as much upon solemn Oath? No, nor I. How do I then know it? Has an Angel appeared to me, and told me as much? No. How then? Why, how did the *Israelites*, who lived above two thousand years after the Institution of the Sabbath, know, that God Almighty commanded their

their first Father *Adam* to keep it holy? They had no book of it; the Book of *Genesis* being written above two thousand years after by *Moses*. I conceive they knew it thus. *Adam* instantly upon God-Almighties Command, set himself Religiously to observe that day, and taught his Children to do so also; his Children practised and taught their Children downwards, till *Moses* his days. Nor had any reason to doubt of the Divine Institution of that first holy day, because it was not transmitted and recommended to them by a Book. Nor would it have been a sufficient excuse for any one then to have pretended, how could they be certain that some of their Ancestors betwixt them and *Adam*, had not of their own head superstitiously devised a Religious observation of that day before all others; unless they could have produced some positive evidence of such an Innovation. In like manner I say concerning the holy *Fast* of Lent. The Holy Apostles first taught the observation of it in the several Countrys where they Preached the Gospel; their Converts fell to the practice of it, and taught their Children in like manner; and so one Generation another, till our present days, and this all over the Christian World. Now, unless *Non-Conformists* can shew when this burdensome precept of Fasting-Lent was imposed upon Christendom since the first planting of Christianity, I cannot see how they can more excuse themselves from this Obligation, than could the *Israelites* excuse themselves from the keeping of *Saturday Sabbath*, which was ordained two thousand years before they were born; and there was also as yet no written Word of God at all for any such observation. But what proof can be brought, that all intermediate Generations since the Apostles, in several Christian Countrys, have kept Lent? A much stronger then *Jacob* could bring to prove to his Children, that *Saturday Sabbath* had been kept ever since *Adam*. He could only produce the Testimony of the present Generation, that so they had been taught by their Fathers and Grand-fathers time out of mind; nor had they any Tradition amongst them of a later beginning of such an Observation: Written Records, Divine or Human he had none. I, besides the Testimony of those of the present Age in several Christian Countrys, who affirm that they have Immemorially from the first planting of Christianity amongst them, Religiously observed Lent, will produce by and by Records of above a thousand years standing for its Apostolical Institution.

But positively to prove that the Apostles appointed *Lent*; I argue thus. Two hundred years agoe, *England, France, Spain, Germany, Italy,*

Italy, and all the Eastern Church, universally *Fasted* Lent, as 'tis evident by the Records and Annals of our own and those other Christian Countries. Therefore the Apostles taught Lent to their first Converts both in the Eastern and Western World where they Preached. For it cannot be imagined that so many several Countrys, Kings, and Subjects, Priests, and People, could by chance fall upon the yearly practice of Abstaining from flesh forty days before *Easter*: Therefore, they must either all at first be taught so by their first Masters of Christianity, which is the Conclusion intended to be proved; or some Universal Supream Authority, Ecclesiastical or Civil, must so have commanded them to do; or some Preachers first in one Country, and then in another, must so have perswaded them to do in some Age since. But no Annals of our own, or other Christian Countrys make any mention of any such Preachers, or any such Ordination made by any general Council, Pope, Prince, or Emperor. Nor yet have we, or other Christian Countrys wanted Ecclesiastical Historiographers, who in their Memorials have taken notice of far lesser matters than such an Innovation as this must needs have been, had the Apostles taught the World no such Observance. And the truth is, 'tis pure Ignorance in Ecclesiastical History, and the works of the Primitive Fathers, that makes so many waver in the Belief of the Apostolical Institution of Lent; in which, if they were well Conversant, they could not possibly doubt of it. Further, Not only two hundred years ago; but twelve hundred years agoe, Lent was Universally observed in the whole Christian World, both in the Eastern and Western Church, as is manifest out of the pious works of the prime Pillars and Pastors of Christs Church, in the fourth and fifth Century of Christianity. Nor do the Opposers of Lent deny so much, and therefore appeal to the first 300. years after our Saviour; for which time, and for which only, they pretend the Christian worship was untainted, and not infected with the Superstitious observation of Lent. And no doubt they have a great deal of reason to think so Charitably of the Primitive Christians, who for the first 300. years after our Saviour, were all over the World sought after to death, for their Religion, that they would have a care to keep that Religion unspotted, and teach the same faithfully to their Posterity, which they were all ready every day to dye for, and many of them actually did dye for. Besides, what a reproach would it be to our B. Saviour, that his Church should be Universally over-run with Superstition within 300. years after his Death; and yet *Moses* should be able so to establish a Religion

Religion, as it should be transmitted to Posterity untainted for many Generations? Especially when our Lord had promised that he would so firmly settle and found his Church, that all the power of Hell should never be able to prevail against it. But men think our Adversaries might extend their Charity to the Christians of the fourth, fifth, and sixth Century, and not think they would have so little regard to the Religion taught them, and Seal'd to them by their Ancestors with their dearest blood, as immediately to change and corrupt it; and by it so altered and corrupted, infect themselves and their Posterity as much as in them lay, to all Generations, with a dangerous *Superstition and Will-worship*.

Let us suppose then that for the first 300. years of Christianity, the Church of Christ in *England, Italy, Greece*, and other Countrys observed no such thing as *Lent-Fast*; and consider by what means possible, the fourth Age could not only bring it in all over the Christian World, but bring it in so secretly and covertly, that the prime Doctors of the fifth Age should not be able to discern that this new burden was superadded to Christianity by their immediate Progenitors, but should be verily perswaded that such an observation had immemorially from Generation to Generation descended to them from the first Planters of Christianity, the Apostles. And yet its evident that the fifth Age did not only keep Lent, but also kept it as an Apostolical Institution; and the prime Christian Doctors of that Age have left it upon Record in their deservedly admired works, that they kept this *Holy-fast* as an Observance taught them by Tradition from the Apostles. Hear their own words; *St. Hierom* in his Epistle to *Marcella*: *We Fast one Lent (Quadragesima) within the compass of the whole year, according to the Traditions of the Apostles, in a season fit for us. The Montanists keep three Lents in the year, as if three Saviours had suffered.* Now, if for the first 300. years there had been no such observance by Christians at *Rome*, but if in the fourth Century some Bishop of *Rome*, or some Provincial or general Council, or Christian Emperor had first introduced it, could a Priest of *Rome*, and one well versed in all Ecclesiastical matters as *S. Hierom* was, err so grossly, as to mistake so new an Institution for an Apostolical Tradition, that is for an Observance taught the City of *Rome* from Father to Son, from the Apostles? For the Greek Church, hear the Testimony of *Theophilus*, Patriarch of *Alexandria* (to the Patriarches of which See, it was entrusted by the first General Council, that they should yearly signify beforehand, to the rest of the Churches,

as well as their own, the true time of *Easter*.) In his first Paschal Epistle he writes, thus: *Let us cure the divers wounds of Vices, &c. And so may we enter the Fasts at hand, beginning Lent the 30th. day of the Month Mechir (as it were our February, the Egyptians reckoning 30. days in every month) The week of the salutary Pasch, on the 5th. day of the Month Pharmuth, (or April) and ending the Fasts according to the Evangelical Traditions on the Evening of the Saturday, being the tenth of Pharmuth; and on the next Lords day, the 11th. of the same moneth, let us Celebrate the Feasts.* The like he says in his second Paschal Epistle; and again he says, according to the Evangelical Traditions. I add the Testimony of S. Cyril, Patriarch of the same Alexandria in the next Age, in his 20th. Homily *de festis Paschalibus*. So, to let us keep a pure Fast, beginning the Holy Lent from such a day, ending also the Fast on the 7th. day of Pharmuth, late in the Evening, according to the Traditions Apostolical. The same S. Cyril, in 19. other of his Homily, cited by B. Gunning, *de festis Paschalibus* (Preached in so many several years) refers the same Fasts of Lent to Tradition, Appointment, or Instruction Evangelical. *The Law of Abstaining in Lent, was always in the Church, says the above-cited Theophilus Alexandrinus.* Now, can it be imagined that these two Learned Patriarches (to whom, by the whole Christian Church was committed the care of signifying the due time of Lent and *Easter*) had the Holy Fast of Lent been so lately brought in by some Universal Ecclesiastical or civil Authority, could be ignorant of it, and think, and tell all the World also that they had been so taught to end Lent from Generation to Generation, from the Apostles?

Let it be. The Pastors of Christs Church in the fourth Century, met together in a General Council, though for the first 300. years there had been no such Custom amongst Christians to Fast Lent, might make a Law of Abstinence from certain Meats for 40. days before *Easter*, and command the whole Christian World to obey it; but they could not possibly have the Impudence to annex to such an Ordination; and thus we have been taught to Fast by Tradition from the Apostles, when they all must needs know themselves to be the first Ordainers of such an Observance: Nor could they possibly impose it upon their Posterity such a belief, but their Posterity must needs know that such a custom was no Antienter than their immediate Progenitors. Which being so, how comes it to pass, that S. Hierom, and other Learned Doctors in the fourth and fifth Century, tell us that they kept Lent by Tradition from the Apostles; if the Holy Apostles were not the

the first Teachers of it, but some particular Preachers, or a General Council, or some civil Ecclesiastical power since? The first opposers of Lent, though they had the Impiety to call it Superstition and Worship, yet they had not the Impudence to say they had been so taught to call it from Father to Son, ever since the Apostles, but pretended their Ancestors for many hundred years had been in blindness and ignorance; but they by reading the Holy Scriptures and Writers of the first 300. years, found there was no such observance in the Primitive Church. In like manner, had the keeping of Lent been an Innovation, the first Introducers of it must have pleaded for it in the fourth or other Century, as the Opposers of it in this latter Age pleaded against it. They must not have said, Abstain from certain Meats in the Holy Time of Lent, for so we have been taught to do from Father to Son from the Apostles, for every one would have known this to be a notorious Lye; but they must have pretended to have more light than their immediate Progenitors; and have said the Apostles and Primitive Christians used such Abstinence; but servors of Piety decaying, the world for some Centuries had laid aside that holy, but troublesome Mortification, and they were stirred up by Almighty God to retrieve that Religious Primitive custom: But no Ecclesiastical History, in so much as any one Christian Country in the world, makes mention of any such manner of introducing the *Holy Fast* of Lent; but on the contrary, wheresoever Lent is observed, the Observers of it profess from Generation to Generation to have observed it, from the first planting of Christianity amongst them; and wheresoever Lent is not observed, its Non-observers do profess only from such a time to have not observed it; and their Ancestors before that time, for divers Generations, ever since they cannot well tell when, had blindly observed it; whence it is manifest that the observation of Lent is the ancient Christian practice; and its non-observance a Novelty.

And indeed, had the keeping of Lent been a Novelty, and not heard of in the Primitive times, its observance being so burthensome and contrary to flesh and blood; and besides, as its Opposers say, Superstitious also, its not possible it should be introduced not into one, but into all the Christian Countries of both the Eastern and Western Church in a short time, and with a small industry of its Introducers, and without great opposition both from good Men for its Superstition, and from bad Men for its troublesome-ness, to Corrupt nature. But no Ecclesiastical History, though far lesser matters be Recorded, makes

makes mention of any such opposition made against Lent in its first bringing in, or how, or by whom it was brought in, even into so much as one particular Diocese. But all Records testify that the prime Doctors, both of the Greek and Latin Church, in the fifth and sixth Century, have been most Religious Observers, and Zealous defenders of it, which certainly they would never have been, had Lent been a Superstitious Novelty, and not heard of in the first 300. years. And indeed, whosoever maturely considers the genius and temper of the Christian Doctors and Bishops for the first five hundred years after our Saviour, will find it impossible for all the power of Hell to impose a Novelty upon them. For they were not like the seeming Zelots of our Age, pretenders to new Lights; but their Profession was, not to correct Antiquity, but faithfully to deliver to Posterity what they immemorially from the Apostles had received from their Ancestors; and their great Answer to Introducers of new Doctrines or Practices was: *Nihil novandum nisi quod traditum est.* We must Innovate nothing, but stick close to what has been delivered to us by our Fore-fathers. Does a *Montanus* upon pretext of Divine Inspiration, endeavor to impose upon Christians the observation of three Lents in the year; the Church of Christ replies by one of her prime Doctors, *S. Hierom*; We Fast one Lent within the compass of the whole year, according to the Tradition of the Apostles: The Montanists keep three Lents in the year, as if three Saviours had suffered. For other Instances, I refer my Reader to the Golden Treatise of *S. Vincentius Lertmenfis* against Innovations. As for Pretenders to discover new truths by reading of the Holy Scriptures, its easily conceivable how such persons may be imposed upon by subtil Sophisters, and lead in to Superstitious practices, and made to believe Erroneous Doctrines, to wit, by bad and new Interpretations of good and antient Scriptures. But on the other side, how shall a Teacher of Novelties deceive a Country, which is resolved to hold fast whatsoever Doctrine or Practice was taught them by their immediate Progenitors, who received the same Doctrine or Practice by an uninterrupted delivery from Father to Son from the Apostles. Let him pretend Scriptures, and bring a thousand places out of the Law, Psalms, Prophets, and Apostles, what will the Reply be? The Scriptures you alledge we Reverence, and have ever been taught to Reverence, them as Divine; but we have been taught to interpret and understand them in another manner and sense then you alledge them. Let him pretend Authority of Doctors, as Learned as *Origen*, or as Holy as *Cyprian*; nay, if he

will, a whole Provincial-Council as numerous as that in *Africa*, which determin'd Re-baptization of Persons Baptized by Hereticks; they reply, We must not Innovate, we must hold to what was taught us by our Ancestors. What means then to make persons thus disposed to leave their antient faith and practice, and admit of a Novelty? you must prove to them that you and they, and other Christians in several Countrys have been taught so to believe by your immediate Predecessors, and uninterruptedly from Father to Son from the Apostles; but then you cease to be a Preacher of Novelties contrary to the supposition. Apply what has been said to our present Controversie.

Now that the study of the Christian Church in the fifth Century was, not to deliver to Posterity, Doctrins of her own devising, but carefully to keep what she had received from her Fore-elders, and faithfully to teach her Children what she had been taught by her Fathers, is manifest out of *S. Vincent* cited above, who lived in that Age, and testifies that often asking of very many his Contemporaries famous for their Sanctity and Learning, how he might be able to discern the truth of the Catholick Faith from the falsity of heretical pravity; he always received this Answer in a manner from them all: *That if he desired to remain sound in his Faith, he must fortifie it; first with the Authority of the divine Law, and then with the Tradition of the Catholick Church*; that is as he explicates himself afterwards: He must examin what has always, all over the Christian Church, and by all Christian Doctors, or in a manner by all, been Believed, and hold to that against all Novelties, though defended by private Doctors, never so Holy, or never so Learned, or producing never so many Scriptures for themselves, if interpreted after a new manner. But saies the same *S. Vincent*, chap. 2. *Here perhaps some body may ask, seeing the Canon of the Scriptures is perfect, and is it self sufficient, and more than sufficient for all things; what need is there to add to it the Authority of the Ecclesiastical or Churches understanding of it? Because the holy Scripture, by reason of its depth, is not by all taken in one and the same sense; for Photinus expounds it one way, Sabellius another, Donatus another, Arrius another.* And chap. 41. He tells us how the third General Council held in his days at *Ephesus*, proceeding according to this rule, Condemned *Nestorius*. For the Fathers of that Christian Synod, in number about 200. having consulted the sentiment of their Predecessors, the eminent Doctors of the Oriental and Western Church, *S. Peter of Alexandria, S. Athanasius, S. Theophilus, S. Gregory Nazianzen, S. Basil, S. Gregory Nyssen, S. Felix, S. Julius,*

S. Julius, S. Cyprian, S. Ambrose, concerning their Controversie in debate, they resolved to hold their Doctrin, to follow their Counsel to believe their Testimony, to obey their Judgment. *Qua tandem, &c.* What were at length (saies S. Vincent) the Voyces and Votes of them all, but that what was anciently delivered should be kept; what was of late invented should be exploded? After which we admired and proclaimed the great Humility and Sanctity of that Council: In which so many Priests, in a manner also the greater part were so many Metropolitans, and of so great Erudition and Learning, as they were almost all able to dispute of Dogms; to whom, when their gathering together in one, seemed to add a confidence of daring and decreeing something from themselves; yet notwithstanding they would presume nothing, arrogate nothing at all to themselves, but take all possible heed lest they should deliver to their Posterity what themselves had not received from their Fathers; and not only well disposed the matter for the present, but also give example to them that were to come; to wit, that they should reverence the Dogms of Sacred Antiquity, and condemn (ad inventa) the additional inventions of prophane Novelty. Had Abstinence from certain kind of Meats for 40. days before Easter been a Superstitious Novelty, its manifest no Introducer of it could have perswaded it to a Christian Church thus principled; as the Doctors of this Age were. They would all unanimously have reclaimed, nothing must be Innovated, besides what has been delivered to us by our Ancestors. Or was Lent first taught in the Age fore-going; and were the present Pastors of this 5th. Age in the actual belief and practice of it? If so, how possibly could they profess to be such Zealots for Antiquity, and such Exploders of Novelty, and yet themselves most Religious Observers of a Superstitious practice, never heard of till it was of late invented by their immediate Progenitors? And how would their Adversary Nestorinus have upbraided them with it, when they objected to him the Novelty of his Doctrin? Or perhaps was Lent first introduced in the third Age? But that could not be neither; the Doctors of that Age being no less Zealous for delivered doctrines and practices, nor less Opposers of Novelties, than the 5th. Age, as is manifest by the contest betwixt the Bishop of Carthage and the Bishop of Rome, and his Collegues, where the Assertors of Re-baptization wanted neither Wit nor Eloquence; nor number, nor verisimilitude of truth, nor Oracles of the Divine Law, but understood after a bad and a new manner, as S. Vincent saies, chap. 9, & 10. How then came they to lose their cause? S. Stephen and his Collegues re-

claimed, *Nihil novandum nisi quod traditum est.* Nothing is to be innovated besides what has been delivered to us. *Agrippinus*, Bishop of Carthage, holding Rebaptization against the Divine Canon, against the rule of the Universal Church, against the sense of all his fellow-Priests, against the Custom and Institutions of his Ancestors; and hereby (as *S. Vincent* observes) giving a form of Sacrilege to all Hereticks, this overthrew him. This then was not an Age wherein to Introduce either Novel practices or Doctrins into the Church, nor any other before *S. Vincent*. For he tells us, chap. 9. *Mos iste, &c. That Custom has always flourished in the Church, and by how much any one has been more Religious, the more readily has he opposed new Innovations.* We have heretofore plenty of examples every where. And this manner of discouraging proves a *Priori*, that had Lent been a Superstitious Novelty, it could not possibly have been brought into the Christian Church for the first 500. years; and yet its manifest by all the Christian Writings of the 4th. and 5th. Age, that it was then Universally practised both in the Eastern and Western Church; whence it follows, that it is no Superstitious practice, but true Christian Piety, and was taught the World by the first planters of Christianity.

Although our Learned Adversaries deny not, but that the prime Doctors, and chief Champions of Christianity, of the 4th. and 5th. Age, were Zealous Observers and Preachers of the Quadragesimal Fast of Lent, and for this cause appeal to the first 300. years; yet for the satisfaction of others less Learned, I have thought fit to Transcribe their Testimonies as they are cited by Bishop *Gunning*, in his Learned Treatise in defence of the Paschal or Lent-Fast.

Hear then the Testimonies of the Christian Doctors of the 4th. and 5th. Century; and if you have the least grain of Christian modesty, dread to call that Superstition which so many Grave Fathers extol as singular Christian Piety. *S. Basil*, in his Sermons, *de Jejunio*, makes mention of Lent-Fast: For he makes mention of five days Fasting together, commanded to be observed by all degrees all over the world, which returned by an orderly course. Now in other his Contemporaries we find express mention of a Forty-days Fast; nor was there ever by Christians Fasted five days consequently but in Lent; and the reason he mentions five days, is, because the *Grecians* only Fasted five days in every week in Lent, leaving out Saturday and Sunday. Hear his own words, *Hom. 1. Let us as becomes Saints, receive the days that are at hand, not with a sad Soul, but with a cheerful affection.---Be not sad, when thou art Cured.---Whoever amidst*
sumptuous

sumptuous Feasts and continual delights was made partaker of any Spiritual gift? Moses, that he might a second time receive the Law, needed a second Fast.---Doeſt thou not eat Fleſh? But thou eateſt up thy Brother. Doeſt thou abſtain from Wine? But thou doeſt not forbear to injure thy Neighbour. Thou expecteſt the Evening before thou take thy reſection, but ſpends the whole day in Law-Courts --- Let not Drunkenneſs introduce thee to the myſteries of Fasting.---The Weſtler is exerciſed before he weſtle for the Prize; the Faſter is prepared to Faſt by Temperance. Do not as if thou wouldeſt Revenge thy ſelf on the days of Fasting, or mock the Author of the Law, lay up againſt theſe five days the Treafure of Surſetting.---Our Lord who has brought us to the recourſe of this time, give us as to Combatants, throughout theſe days, in which we are called out to Combate, to declare the ſtrength and Nerves of Continence, Orat. 2. Fasting is at all times profitable to thoſe who voluntarily undertake it, but much more at this time when the denunciation of Fasting is proclaimed all over the World. Nor is there any Iſland nor Continent, nor City, nor Nation, nor the fartheſt corner of the World, where the Edict of Fasting is not heard. S. Gregory Nazianzen, Orat. 4. Chriſt Faſted a little before his Temptation, we before the Paſchal feaſt; And Orat. 41, 42. Yeſterday I was Crucified with Chriſt, to day I am as it were glorified with him. S. Epiphanius In expoſitione fidei Catholice. The ſame Church has been wont to obſerve Lent, continuing in Faſtings: But the 6. days of the week before Eaſter; all the people continue in dry dyet, uſing then Bread, Salt, and Water at the Evening; Yet thoſe that are very devout, paſs two, three, and four days, and ſome the whole week, untill Cock-crowing on Eaſter-day. S. Ambroſe in his book de Helia & Jejunio. A Lent is faſted with us all days, except Saturday and the Lords-day. And Serm. 25. Our Lord, after he had faſted 40. days, overcame the Devil; not but that he could have overcome him before his faſtings, but that he might ſhew unto us, that then we ſhall be able to overcome the Devil, when by 40. days we have been through faſting Victors over our Carnal deſires.---For neiſher Brethren is it a little fault to break by greedineſs of the Belly, the Lent indicted to Believers, and the Conſecrated Faſt. Serm. de Jejunio & Elia. Behold, through the mercy of God we have paſt through the indicted Faſts of Lent, and have fulfilled by the devotion of Abſtinenſe, the Commands of our Lord. Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, lib. 3. Paſch. ad totius Egypti Episcopos. By no means let us in the days of Lent, as Luxurious Rich men are wont to do, long aſ-

ter a Cup of Wine.---They that keep the Precepts of the Laws, cast not Wine on fasting days, refuse to eat Flesh, &c.

S. Hierom in his Comment upon *Jonah*, c. 3. Our Lord himself, the true *Jonas*, sent to Preach unto the World, fasted 40. days, and leaving us the Inheritance of fasting, under this number prepares our souls for the eating of his Body. In his Comment. on *Isaiah* 58. Our Lord fasted 40. days in the Wilderness, that he might leave unto us the solemn days of Fasts. S. Chrysostom in his 11th. Lent-Sermon upon *Genesis*. Wherefore, in every thing, due measure and moderation is best.---According whereunto, therefore, concerning this season also of the Holy Lent, we shall now find it to have been ruled out unto us. For as in publick Conveyance of Travellers, there are certain Stages and Inns that the wearied Passengers may rest themselves, and intermitting their Labours, they may again set upon their Journey. In like manner here also in Holy Lent, our Lord has indulged these two weekly days (the Saturday and the Lords-day) to such as undertake this course of this fast, like certain Stages or Inns, Shores, or Havens, that both the body may be a little relaxed from its labours of fasting, and the mind comforted; that when these two days shall be past over, they may again with cheerfulness set upon this their good and profitable Travelling in this way. S. Gregory Nyssen in his 2d. Oration of the Resurrection. Matthew added the time when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week: The Night, saith he, was so far passed, that it was now the time of Cock-crowing, which giveth warning that the light of the approaching day is at hand. For this cause also at this time, viz. (far in the Night before Easter-day) and not in the very Evening of the Saturday, dissolving or ending the Fastings, we begin the Joy, the Custom, that obtains with all men consenting thereto. This for the fourth Age.

In the 5th. Age S. Augustin in his 119th. Epist to *Januarium*. The Lent truly of Fastings has Authority both in the old Books, out of the Fast of Moses and Elias, and out of the Gospel, because our Lord Fasted so many days.---In what part therefore of the year more aptly could the Observation of Lent be Constituted, then in that which is Conterminous and next unto the Passion of our Lord.---That those 40. days before Easter should be observed the Custom of the Church has Corroborated. In his 118. Epist. to the same Januar. But those things which we keep being not written, but delivered down, which are observed throughout the whole world, are given us to understand that they are retain'd, as commended and appointed, either by the Apostles themselves, or by Plenary

Coun.

Concils, whose Authority in the Church is most wholesome; as for example, that the Passion of our Lord, and his Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven, and the coming of the Holy Ghost, are Celebrated with an Anniversary Solemnity. S. Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome, in his 6. sermon of Lent. That the Apostolical Institution may be fulfilled in the Fast of forty days, not by sparing from our Dyet only, but especially by abstinence from sins. And in his 9. h. Sermon, of Lent. In which (days of the Paschal Fast) with good cause severer Fastings were ordained by the Apostles through the teaching of the Holy Ghost, that by a common participation of the Cross of Christ, we also should do something in that which he did for us, as the Apostle says: if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him. S. Chrylologus. That we Fast Lent, is not a human Invention, it is of Divine Authority. S. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, is above-cited at large: This for the 5th. Age. In the following Ages the observation of Lent in all Christian Countrys is so manifest, that no body, any whit Versed in Church History can possibly doubt of it.

Now after the manifest Testimonies of so many and so Learned and so holy Doctors of Christs Church, the Opposers of the Holy Fast of Lent must give me leave to bespeak them in the words of the great S. Augustin, by him directed to Julian the Pelagian, after a like Citation about another matter of these very Holy Fathers by me now cited, as to a great part of them. *Tu qui am crebro, &c.* "Thou sadly deluded Zelor, that doest so often object to us Catholick Christians the name of Will-worshippers, the crime of Superstition, for "Religiously observing the Holy Fast of Lent: If thou beest awake, "see, what, and what kind of men, and glorious defenders of the "Christian Faith thou darest to bespatter under our names, with so "execrable a Crimination. Go now, and object to us the crime of "Superstition, dissemble and feign thy self not to know what they say "in this point; overlook them as it were, and attack us only, as not "knowing that under our name they are reviled; and confidently insult over so many, and so great Doctors of the Church of Christ; "who after a most Saintly Life, and having beaten down the Errors "of their times, most gloriously went out of this Life before you and "your Comrades bubbled up. Doest thou see with what kind of Men "we sustain thy Reproaches? Doest thou see with whom we have "the same common cause, which without any sober consideration thou "calumniate and endeavours to expugn? Doest thou see (proud "Zelor) how pernicious it is unto thy self to object so horrible a
"Crime

" Crime of *Will-worship* to such men as these, and how glorious it is
 " to us to sustain the charge of any Crime, together with such Do-
 " ctors as these ? Or if thou dost see, see, and hold thy peace, and
 " let so many Catholick tongues silence thy Phanatical tongue,
 " The Russian *Polemus*, to compleat his wild ramble, would needs
 " early in the morning, half drunk with his Night Revels, go to the
 " School of the grave Sophist *Xenocrates*, to affront him and his
 " Schollars. But he was no sooner entred the School of that sober
 " Platonist, but the very sight of the modest and grave Comport-
 " ment of the Philosopher and his Schollars did so strike my young
 " Gallant, that he was quite out of Countenance ; and ashamed of
 " himself ; he pull'd off his Drunken Bayes and composd himself to
 " modesty, and became his Convert, whom he came on purpose to de-
 " ride and scoff at. Such force had the grave Countenances of a so-
 " ber Platonist and his School to compose a rude Russian. Finding
 " my presumptuous Non-Conformist Drunk with Pride and Self-con-
 " ceit, I could think of no better means to reduce him to Sobriety,
 " than to bring him, not into the School of a sober *Ethnick* Philoso-
 " pher, but into a grave Assembly of the most memorable Bishops
 " and Doctors of the School of Christ. To whom certainly so much
 " a greater Reverence and respect is due, by how much their Doctor
 " and Master Christ is greater than *Xenocrates's* Master and Doctor,
 " *Plato*. I desire now, my conceited Non conformist, that thou
 " wouldst think it worth thy while, to eye, to look upon so many and
 " so grave Prelates of the Catholick Church : And imagin them to
 " look as it were upon thee, and mildly and gently to say unto thee,
 " *Itane nos fili Juliane, &c.* Is it so indeed, Son N. N. are we
 " then Will worshippers ? What Answer wouldst thou give them ?
 " With what Face wouldst thou look upon them ? What Arguments
 " would occur to thee ? Wouldst thou dare, wouldst thou have the
 " Face to produce such wooden Daggers, as thou art ever and a-
 " non drawing upon us ? Or rather would not such pittifull Weapons
 " fall out of thy hand at the presence of so great Doctors, and such
 " grave Prelates of Gods Church ? Wouldst thou have the Fore-head
 " to tell the great S. *Hierom* ; Not that which goes into a Man defiles
 " him, but that which comes out : Ye observe days and times I am a-
 " afraid of you, forbidding to abstain from Meats, which God has or-
 " dained to be received with Thanksgiving, &c. As if that Great
 " Doctor and his Venerable Fellows could be ignorant of such petty
 " Cavils as these ? *Tantumne apud se, &c.* Can now an S. M. or
 an

" an E. C. have so much Authority, with any person of Sobriety,
 " that he should for their regards, not only forsake so many and to
 " great Doctors and defenders of the Christian Faith, from the rising
 " of the Sun to the going down thereof, but also dare to call them
 " Superstitious Will-worshippers? I desire my conceited Non-Con-
 " formist would but consider into what an Assembly I have brought
 " him. 'Tis an Assembly of Saintly Doctors, not a popular multi-
 " tude; such as were not only Children, but Fathers of the Church,
 " famous in their Generations for Learning and Sanctity; who well
 " furnish'd with Spiritual Weapons, strenuously Warred against the
 " Hereticks of their days, and having happily finished the labours of
 " their dispensation, Holily went to rest in peace. They are of that
 " number, concerning whom it was fore-told: For Fathers are born
 " unto thee Children, thou shalt constitute them Princes over all the
 " Earth. Nor was the practice we are now disputing, any new In-
 " vention of theirs; but what they learnt in the Church of Christ, in
 " the time of their Rudiments, that they taught the Church of Christ
 " in the time of their Honors. But if my Non-Conformist will
 " perhaps say, he does not charge *S. Hierom*, or *S. Chrysostom*, &c.
 " with the crime of Superstition; he must give me leave to tell him,
 " nor then does he justly charge us, whom he sees in the same Cause
 " to have followed their steps. But if he will only Reproach us with
 " such a Calumny, not for any other reason, but because we think
 " concerning the Holy Fast of Lent what they thought, hold what
 " they held, Preach what they Preach'd; who does not see that he
 " openly reviles us only, but secretly has the like judgment of them?
 " For what they believe, we believe; what they teach, we teach,
 " yield to them, and you yield to us; acquiesce in their sentiments,
 " and you'll cease to condemn ours. Moreover, this grave Assem-
 " bly of Antient Doctors, to whom we appeal, then judged con-
 " cerning this our Cause, when no body could say they had favor or
 " ill-will for either party. They had neither Friendship nor Enmity
 " with you or us. That which they found in the Church, that they
 " held; that which they learnt, that they taught. That which they
 " received from their Fathers, they delivered to their Children. We
 " did not as yet appeal with you to them as Judges, and our Cause
 " was decided by them: Neither you nor we were known to them,
 " and we recite their Sentences given for us against you. We did
 " not yet Contest with you, and they pronouncing Sentence for us,
 " we have overcome you. Or will my Non-Conformist have the
 " D " Impu-

" Impudence to accuse (as some do) these grave Doctors of blindness;
 " A multitude of Blind men for-sooth avails nothing to find out the
 " Truth; and these were the Errors and mistakes of those Learned
 " Doctors. What an Age are we fallen into? Truth must be called
 " Error, and Error Truth; Light Darkness, and Darkness, Light.
 " *S. Ambrose, S. Hierom, S. Cyril, S. Crystom* are blind, but *S.*
 " *M. C. D.* and *E. F.* see. These Doctors I have called a Coun-
 " cel of, have left such Monuments of their Sanctity and Learning in
 " their Holy and Learned Writings, that the whole Christian
 " Church has ever admired and revered them as her prime Cham-
 " pions against Pagans, Jews, and Hereticks; yea, our very Adversa-
 " ries pretend a Sacred Reverence for them also. They were Per-
 " sons of such Learning and Sanctity, that if a Synod of Bishops were
 " gather'd out of the whole World, it would be much if so many,
 " and such Doctors could be found to sit in it; neither indeed were
 " these all at one time. But God-Almighty, as pleases Him, and as
 " He judges to be expedient, scatters a few more excellent and Faith-
 " ful Dispensers of his Mysteries in several Ages, and distances of
 " places. By such Planters, Waterers, Builders, Pastors, Nursing-Fathers,
 " after the Apostles, the Holy Church has encreased. Now what an Im-
 " prudence, & what an Impudence must it be for any to presume to ac-
 " cuse of the horrible Crime of Superstition, so many holy, egre-
 " gious and memorable Doctors of the Catholick Verity; and more-
 " over, together with them the whole Church of Christ, to which
 " Divine Family they Faithfully Ministering Spiritual Food, flourished
 " with great glory in our Lord? Nay further, they who dare to op-
 " pose the manifest Sentiment, not of so many Platonical, Aristoteli-
 " cal, or Zenonical Doctors, but of so many Saints and Illustrious
 " Prelates in the Church of God; and these, some of them singularly
 " endowed with human Literature, and all of them eminently Learn-
 " ed in the Sacred Letters, have reason not so much to fear them, as
 " him who made them profitable Vessels to himself. These Judges,
 " by how much the more desirable they ought to be unto thee, if thou
 " did'st hold the Catholick Faith, by so much thou hast more reason
 " to fear them, because thou opposes't the Catholick Faith, which they
 " suck'd in in Milk, and took in in solid Meat, which Milk and Meat
 " they Ministered to Little and Great, and which Faith they mani-
 " festly and stoutly defended against his Enemies; yea, against you,
 " then not as yet born. For, not only when they lived did they by
 " their words, but also by their Writings, which they left to Poste-
 " rity,

“ rity, did they strenuously defend the Catholick Faith, that they
 “ might break in pieces your Arguments. Hitherto *S. Augustin.* l. 1.
 & 2. *contra Julianum.*

I thought fit to adjoyn this Reflexion of *S. Austen*, though super-
 abundant to the force of my Argument, it being sufficient for my
 purpose to prove that Lent-Fast was generally practised in the 4th.
 and 5th. Century, both by the Eastern and Western Churches, and
 so much evidently follows from the Authorities above cited. For,
 though some may be so self-conceited, as to confess that *S. Hierom*,
S. Ambrose, *S. Basil*, *S. Crysoptom*, and the rest of the Holy Fathers
 Greek and Latin, deemed the observation of Lent to be a pious Chri-
 stian practice, but they with humble submission, judged it to be Su-
 perstition, Will-worship, and the Doctrin of Devils: Yet few, I think,
 but have so much regard for these Primitive Doctors, as to allow
 them so much judgment as to know what was the practice of their se-
 veral Churches in their days, and so much fidelity as to write the
 Truth as to that particular, which is sufficient for the purport of my
 discourse; unless you can think that these Holy Fathers were of one
 Faith, & their Flocks which Reverence them as Sts. of another. For the
 4th. and 5th. Age practising Fasting in Lent, not as a piece of Piety
 begun by themselves, but commended to them by Tradition from the
 Apostles, it not only follows that it could not be first begun by their
 immediate Progenitos, which had it been, they could not possibly
 have been ignorant of it; but also, that it must necessarily have been
 first taught the world by the Apostles. For if the first Converts of
 the Apostles all over the World had not only been taught no such ob-
 servation, but also had been positively instructed to look upon Ab-
 stinence from certain kind of Meats as Superstition, and the Doctrin
 of Devils; and with all, had been charged not to receive any other
 Doctrin, though Preached to them by an Angel sent from Heaven,
 and they in like manner teaching their Children the same they had
 learnt, as none can doubt but they did. How is it possible that the
 Christians in the 4th. Century should most tenaciously adhere to this
 principle of admitting no new Doctrin or Practice, but to hold fast
 to what was delivered them by their Ancestors from the Apostles, and
 yet should themselves Superstitiously Abstain from Meats, and not
 pretend Scripture for it neither, but Apostolical Tradition? But had
 the Pastors of the 4th. Century Abstained from certain Meats on
 pretext of Scripture in such a manner understood by them, or upon
 account of some Decree of a General Council or Law of some Em-

peror, made in the second or third Century, or pretending to follow some person or persons raised up by God in the third Age, to teach the Christian world a more strict observance, it might well be conceiv'd how the 4th. Age might abstain from Meats upon a Religious account, though no such thing had been taught the world by the Apostles, but the quite contrary. And from what has been said, all well put together, I think it is efficaciously concluded against all Opposers of Lent-Fast, that it was taught the world by the Apostles.

But it is not a Tipper, or a Surplice I am Arguing for, but a practice, which if rightly observed, is sufficient to make all the world Saints; and therefore for the more abundant satisfaction of my Reader, I shall now adjoyn positive Evidences out of the Writers of the first 300. years, that the Holy Fast of Lent was practis'd in those most pure and Primitive Times. *S. Denys, B. of Alexandria*, who lived in the middle of the third Age, in his Epistle to *Basilides* the Bishop, Records the Fast before *Easter*, as Universal as the joy and Feast of *Easter*. It will be confessed, saies he, of all agreeably that we ought to begin the Feast, (viz. of *Easter*) and Joy, until that time, humbling our souls in Fastings---they truly which make too much hast, and before well toward mid-night, break their Fast, we blame as regardless, and not Masters of their Appetite, giving over the Race a little before the Goal---. Such indeed as are much worn by the Fasts, and toward the end, as it were faint, we easily pardon if they eat sooner. And in the same Epistle he mentions in special manner the six days of Fasts, to wit, those of the last week not alike observ'd of all. *Origen*, in the beginning of the same Age, *Hom. 10. In Leviticum. Habemus Quadragesima dies, &c.* We have the days of Lent Consecrated to Fasting; we have the fourth and sixth day of the week, on which we solemnly Fast. And certainly a Christian has liberty to Fast at all times, but not out of a Superstitious Observation, but by the Vertue of Continency. The first General Council of *Nice*, held a little after the year 300. did not first ordain the keeping of Lent, but in the sixth Canon, makes mention of it as a time known to all the Christian world; for in that Canon, the Fathers ordain that two Provincial-Councils should be celebrated by the Bishops of every Province every year; one of them *ante dies Quadragesimæ, &c. before the days of Lent*, to the end that all Contests, if any such be, being made up, a pure and solemn gift may be offered to God. Now how should Lent be observed all over the Christian world so early, before any General Coun-

Council? What other Universal cause could there be of so Universal an Observation, but the first teaching of the Apostles? Or if such a practice had been Superstitious, and the Doctrin of Devils, how came so Venerable and holy a Council not to take notice of it? As if they could be ignorant of such Scriptures as falsely understood are alledged against it by Non-Conformists.

In the second Age, *Tertullian* in his Book *de Jejunio*, c. 1, 2. tells us that it was not the Sentiment of some one particular Man, but of all Catholick Christians, who are by him contumeliously called *Psychici*, that the Paschal Fast was Constituted by God, and observed by the Apostles. His words are, *Nam quod, &c.* For as to what appertains to Fasts, they oppose, that there are certain days Constituted by God. They surely think that in the Gospel, those days are determined for Fasts, in which the Bridegroom was taken away, and those days only are now the legitimate days of Christian Fasts, &c. And that thus the Apostles observed the rule of Fasting, imposing no other Token of certain or Set-Fasts to be kept of all in common. And c. 13. *Te prescribere agant ut* that the solemn times for this matter, are to be believed already constituted in the Scriptures, or in the Tradition of our Elders, and that no further observance is to be superadded for the unlawfulness of Innovation. Maintain this your ground, if you can; for lo I convince you, even your selves Fasting, besides the Paschal Fast, those days in which the Bridegroom was taken away, interposing also your selves the half-fasts of the Stations, and your selves other whiles also as each pleases, living on meer Bread and Water.

The same, *Tertullian*, before he was a *Montanist*, testifies in his Book of Prayer, c. ult. *Sic & die Pascha, &c.* So also on the day of *Christis* suffering whereon is observed the common, and as it were public Religion of Fasting. In the same Age *S. Telephorus*, Bishop of Rome, did not first institute Lent-Fast as *Zanchy* observes, l. 1. in 4^m. *Preceptum*, Cited by *B. Gunning* in his Appendix; but only added certain days to be observed over and above by the Clergy. His words are, *Certe Telephorus, &c.* Assuredly *Telephorus*, who was the seventh Bishop of the Roman Church, and a Martyr, about the year of *Christ* 139. makes mention of this (the *Quadragesimal* time above mentioned) as observed before him in the Church. For he added certain days, which he would have observed by Clerks and Priests, over and above what were observed by the Laity.---- We ordain, says he, that all Clergymen, i. e. such as are called into the Lot of our Lord, fast from flesh seven whole weeks before Easter; because as the life of Clergy-men ought

to be distinguish'd from the Conversation of the Laity, so ought there to be a difference in their Fasting also. Now the Church of Rome professing in her self a power to Institute Holy-days, or Fasting-days, had any of her Bishops first ordained Lent-Fast, she would have made no more difficulty of Registering who it was, then she does of telling us when, and by whom was first Constituted the Feast of *Corpus-Christi*, and divers other Ritual Observances. Moreover, in the same Age, there was a difference betwixt S. Polycarp, Disciple of S. John, and by him ordained Bishop of *Smyrna*, together with *Thraseas*, Bishop of *Eumenia*, and S. *Anicetus*, Bishop of *Rome*, with other Western Bishops on the other side, about which difference *Polycarp* came to *Rome*: *Anicetus* professing to follow the Rule received from S. Peter and S. Paul, by the Instruction of his Predecessors, *Xystus*, *Telephorus*, *Hyginus* & *Pius*: and *Polycarp* professing to follow what S. John and other of the Apostles had practised. The words of *Irenaeus* concerning *Polycarp*, whom he had seen and heard, are these. That *Anicetus* could not persuade *Polycarp* to vary from what he had observed ever with John the Disciple of our Lord, and the rest of the Apostles, with whom he had conversed, or spent his time. *Iren. ap. Euseb. l. 5 c. 24.* The same difference revived again about the 97th. year after S. John, betwixt *Polycrates* Bishop of *Ephesus*, with other Asian Bishops, and *Victor*, Bishop of *Rome*, with others of the West. *Polycrates* pleading the Authority of S. John, and S. Philip; and *Victor* pleading the Authority of the Tradition of S. Peter and S. Paul. *Sozom. l. 7. c. 19.* *Polycrates*, and they of *Asia* contending: That from ancient Tradition they deemed that they ought to observe the Feast of the Salutory Pasch on the 14th. day of the month, as being of duty altogether on that day, upon whatsoever day of the week it fell, to put an end to, or dissolve their fastings. On the other side (which was *Victors*) it was alledged, No such Custom to observe on that manner in the rest of the Churches throughout the whole World, they observing from Apostolical Tradition, which came down to that time, that only on that day, which should be also the weekly day of the Resurrection of our Lord, they ought to dissolve or end their Fastings. You see both parties had a Tradition, that the Feast of *Easter* was to conclude certain Fasting days, and all this is witnessed in *Eusebius*, l. 5. c. 23, 24. About *Easter-day* it self, they had indeed different Traditions. S. John and S. Philip finding it useful in those parts of *Asia*, where many Jews Inhabited, by condescension to observe the Christ an *Easter* on the same day with the Jewish *Easter*. But S. Peter and

and *S. Paul*, where no such cause was, prescribed as meet, not to disjoyn their Anniversary from their weekly memorial day of Christ's Resurrection, as *B. Gunning* reflects. We have then *S. John* taught *S. Polycarp* to Fast before *Easter*, as testifies *Irenaus*, who saw and heard *S. Polycarp*. Moreover, in this Age the same *Irenaus* tells *Victor*, in an Epistle to him, that there was Controversie, not only concerning the day it self of *Easter*, but also touching the manner it self of the Fast; but none disputed whether there was to be a Fast or no before *Easter*. His words are, *Neither is the Controversie only about the day (of Easter) but also concerning the form it self of the Fast; for some think they ought to fast one day, some two, others also more, and some by forty hours of Day-time, and of Night, commensurate their day. And such variety of those that keep (this Fast) hath not been made or begun now in our Age, but very long before with our Ancestors, who, as it is meet to believe, not accurately retaining (the manner of the Fast above-mentioned) have changed the Custom which was simple and plain into that which was afterwards. Now what uniform Custom could there precede in the Christian Church, and not be from the Apostles; Irenaus writing thus about the 97th. year, after S. John's death. Though he seems not to speak of the whole Lent-Fast, but only of the Fasts of the Paschal week.*

In the very Age of the Apostles we have the Testimony of *S. Ignatius*, their Contemporary in an Epistle to the *Philippians*. His words are, *Do not Contemn Lent, for it contains an imitation of the Conversion of God. Neither do you despise Passion-week: Fast upon Wednesday and Friday, giving what you leave to the Poor.* Philo the Jew, in his Book of the Religious, says *Eusebius*, l. 2. c. 16, 17. describes the Religious Life of certain Apostolical persons of the Hebrew Nation at *Alexandria*, having not only seen them, but accurately taken knowledge of them, describing there such their Conversation, as is to be found in the Christian Religion only; and he adds, according to the Gospel, and such Religious fastings (says he) which have descended down accurately the same even unto our times, which more eminently were exercised in Fastings and whole Nights Watchings, and attentions unto the Word of God, at the Solemnity of the Passion of our Saviour. It is manifest to every one that Philo comprised in that Writing, Customs delivered in the beginning from the Apostles, Hitherto *Eusebius*. Now let us hear Philo's own words. *These Assemble themselves especially by the space of seven weeks---Wine in those days is not brought in unto their Tables.---And their Table hath not any thing of that which had Blood*

Blood, but Bread for their Food, and Salt for that which they eat with their Bread.-----Some for the space of three days receive no Food; and scarce by the space of six days did they refresh themselves with their natural Food -- A week they observed by a pure and holy Virginal observance which was preparatory to the greatest Feast which was followed with the 50. days Solemnity. Thus Philo, contemporary of the Apostles concerning the Hebrew Christians in and about Alexandria, where S. Mark was set Bishop by S. Peter. I omit the Testimony of the 68. Canon of the Apostles, for that Ecclesiastical Writers do not unanimously agree that those Canons, at least all of them were made by the Apostles; although the sixth General Council Celebrated above a 1000. years ago received and approved 85. of them. There can be no doubt but they are very antient; Bishop Gunning thinks they were made in the second Century by the Successors of the Apostles, who in that Age were commonly (as he says) called Apostles. The 68. h. Canon runs thus *If any Bishop or Priest, or Deacon, or Lector, or Cantor shall not Fast the sacred Lent (Quadragesimam) before Easter, or Wednesday or Friday, let him be deposed, unless he be hindered by weakness of body. But if he be a Laick, let him be deprived of the Communion.* Indeed the Canon does not seem first to institute Lent, but rather supposes it, and urges its observance by inflicting a penalty upon Non-observers: All which makes for my designed purpose; for who could so early, except the Apostles, be the first Authors of such an Institution, when as yet there had been no General Council, except that of the Apostles at Hierusalem.

But have we no Scripture for the Observation of Lent Fast? We have Scripture that our B. Saviour Fasted 40. days; and we have also in Scripture, that if any man says he is in Christ, he ought to walk as he walk'd. Moreover, we have yet more express Scriptures as interpreted not by some one or two Fathers, but by the whole body of Catholic Christians, as Bishop Gunning well observes out of Tertullian cited above. *They (that is the Catholic Christians who are called by him Psychici) surely think that in the Gospel, those days are determin'd for Fasts, in which the Bridegroom was taken away---and a little after, the Paschal Fast, those days in which the Bridegroom was taken away.* Those words then of our B. Lord, in excuse of his Disciples not Fasting whilst he was with them; *Can you make the Children of the Bridegroom fast while the Bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then shall they fast in those days.* Those words, I say, in the sense of the Primitive

primitive Church in the second Century, were intended by our B. Saviour to signify that Christians after his departure should Fast yearly upon *Good-Friday*, the day of his death, and the rest of the *Pascal*, or *Lent-Fast*, those days in which the Bridegroom was taken away. I add, whether those words in those days did in the intention of our Saviour signify Lent-Fast or no; it's evident, had not the Primitive Christians Fast'd Lent, they would never have interpreted our Lords words as they did, which is sufficient for my purpose; to wit, to evince, that the most Primitive pure Church did Fast Lent. And besides, according to common sense, who are more likely to understand aright our B. Saviours, or his Apostles words, they who lived in the next Age to them, or we who live sixteen hundred years after? Do we, or any other Nation in the world understand our written Laws, according to the sense a crafty witty Lawyer can wrest them to signify; or accordingly as they have been immemorially understood since the first making of them, and as cases and disputes have by our Learned Judges been decided by them. More-over, suppose but only the Primitive Christians, for whose sake the Holy Scriptures were written, rightly understood them; and let after Generations interpret the same Scriptures in the sense they were interpreted by their Ancestors; and let this be their great enquiry, how their Fore-elders understood them, and its impossible they should ever be misunderstood, but leave their Interpretation to every private mans sentiment, and you open a gap to all Innovations and Heresies, as Bishop *Gunning* judiciously observes.

Reason (says he, pag. 23.) and experience, and the direction of all Wise men in the Church of God (*Antient and Modern*) the House of Wisdom, Councils, Reverend Fathers and Writers, and our Church in particular, have directed and commanded us not to interpret the Scripture in things of publick concernment to the Churches rule of believing and doing, but as we find it interpreted by the Holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church, as they had received it from those before them. For that the leaving of every man to make anything of any Text, upon any device out of his own head, to the founding of any new and strange Doctrine or Practice as necessary there from, or to the opposing any constantly received Doctrine or Practice of the Church-Universal (for in other matters they may happily with leave quietly abound in their own sense) leaves all bold Innovators (which can draw any disciples after them) to be as much Law-givers to the Church; by their uncontrollable Law interpreting, as any Pope or Enthusiast can or need pretend to be; and hath

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been, and ever will be to the end of the World; the ground of most Heresies and Schisms brought into the Church by Men, who departing from the teaching and stable Interpretation of the Church in their own Instability and Science falsely so called, pervert the Scriptures to their own and others (their obstinate followers) destruction. And indeed, he, who has so much Pride and Self-conceit as to prefer his own seeming sense of holy Scriptures before the sense which Holy Fathers and Christian-Doctors unanimously attest to have received from their Fore-elders, is nextly disposed to vilifie and reject the whole Letter of Sacred Scriptures, upon pretext of being uncertain, whether the Letter now commonly owned and approved by the unanimous consent of Christian Doctors, be indeed that Letter which was left the World by the Apostles.

But if a yearly Religious Observation of the Holy Fast of Lent be of such singular benefit and Spiritual advantage to all Christians; and if also the Apostles of our Lord Jesus did recommend such an Observation to the several Countrys by them Converted to the Christian Faith, how comes it to pass that none of all their Writings which have come to our hands, makes express mention of it? Hear Bishop Gunning, p. 138. *Ritual Observances being Visible, and as it were legible in the Universal Churches constant practice, needed not to be set down in her written rule. Or those which are therein set down, not necessarily, so evidently, but that they might need the Interpretation of such the Churches practice.* And indeed whoever will impartially consider the nature of the Books of the New Testament, will be to far from wondering, that all the Rituals of Christianity are not expressly declared in them, that he will rather wonder there is so much in them of the exterior Rites of Christian Religion as there is. Had any of the Sacred Christian Pen-men written a Book on purpose to declare the whole manner of Christian worship, like *Moses* his *Exodus* or *Leviticus*, we might reasonably have expected an account what days Christians were to set apart for Fasting or Religious Feasting, what Garments they were to use in time of Divine Worship, &c. But they only, as is manifest, writing Books for other intents and purposes by way of History for example, or moral Exhortations, and making mention only by the by of some of our Christian Rites, as they occurred; nothing can be more unreasonable then to expect in their said Writings an express clear mention of every Christian Ceremonial Observance. The four Gospels are a History of our Blessed Saviours Life and Death, who lived as to the external Rites of Religion, according to the

the Jewish Law, and so we cannot reasonably in any of them expect what Fasting or Festival days we Christians are to observe. Indeed had the Acts of the Apostles been intended as an exact Narration, how the Apostles lived as to the whole course of their Life, what days they kept Holy, and what they Fasted, &c. We might reasonably have expected some mention there of Lent and *Easter* : But that holy Book making mention only of some few particular passages of two or three of the Apostles lives, the Apostles might well keep Lent and *Easter* too, and teach them also to their first Converts, and yet there be a profound silence of them in the Book of their Acts : As for S. John's Prophetical Book, it were no ways proper in it to speak of *Easter* or Lent. The rest of the New Testament are certain Epistles or Letters of Spiritual Counsels written by S. Paul, or some other Apostle to particular persons or whole Churches, already instructed in the Christian way of worship : But why they should needs make mention therein of Lent, I understand not, unless perchance the persons they wrote unto, had been deficient in observing of it.

But does not S. Paul expressly decry the keeping of Lent in one of his Epistles, and tell the Christians he wrote to, he was afraid he had laboured in vain amongst them, by reason of their superstitious Observations of Days and Times, *Gal. 4. v. 9, 10. How are ye Converted again to weak and beggarly Elements, which you will serve again? Ye observe Days, and Months, and Times, and Years. I am afraid of you, lest I should have laboured amongst you in vain. Was then the Holy Apostle afraid lest the Galatians should leave Christianity and return to Judaism or Paganism, because of their observing Lent in memory of our Blessed Saviours Fasting 40. days, or Easter in memory of his Resurrection? Is this a likely Story? Or is it not evident from the Context of their returning again to weak and poor Elements, that because of their returning to the Observation of Jewish days, commanded by Moses, or Pagan days in honour of Jupiter, Mars &c. he was afraid they would relinquish the Gospel by them received, and become Jews again or Pagans? But does not the same Apostle 1 Tim. 4. tell us expressly that Abstinence from certain Meats is the Doctrine of Devils, and that nothing which God has made ought to be rejected by us, but eaten with thankfulness? Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the later times some shall depart from the Faith, giving heed to Seducing Spirits and Doctrines of Devils; speaking lies as Hypocrites, having their Consciences seared with a hot Iron; forbidding to Marry, and commanding to abstain from Meats, which God has Cre-*

ared to be received with Thanksgiving of them which believe and know
 the Truth. For every Creature of God is good, and nothing to be re-
 fused, if it be received with Thanksgiving. That we may rightly un-
 derstand these words of S. Paul, we must reflect that upon a double
 account we may abstain from certain Meats or Drinks. First, we
 may abstain from certain Meats, as thinking them, out of Error and Su-
 perstition, naturally unclean and unholy: And to teach Abstinence
 from certain Creatures upon such an account, is deservedly called
 the Doctrin of Devils. And with this Heresie the *Manicheans* are
 charged by S. *Austin* and other Fathers. And that the Apostle meant
 such like Abstainers from certain Creatures, is manifest by the reason
 he gives why Christians should not Abstain upon such an account; to
 wit, because every Creature of God is good, and consequently we
 ought not to reject any as in themselves evil and unclean. Secondly,
 we may abstain from certain Meats or Drinks as less suitable to a time
 of Humiliation, or appeasing of Almighty God for our sins by Peni-
 tential works of Fasting, Weeping, and Mourning, or for some other
 Spiritual end. And such an Abstinence as this is so far from being
 prohibited by S. Paul or any other of the Apostles, that it is com-
 mended not only by the light of Nature, but also by the Holy Scrip-
 tures, and the examples of the Holiest Men that ever lived upon Earth.
 Thus S. *Tymothy* Abstained from Wine continually for Mortification,
 so that S. Paul thought fit to exhort him not always to drink water,
 but to make use of a little Wine for his Stomack-sake and frequent in-
 firmities. Whereas, had it been Superstition to abstain from certain
 Creatures of God upon a Religious account, he ought to have dis-
 swaded him from his Abstinence, by telling him such an Abstinence
 from the good Creatures of God was the Doctrin of Devils, Wil-
 worship, &c. Eating Flesh, and drinking Wine are very Lawful and
 Laudable, when done in their due and proper season; but are no
 ways suitable to days or times when I am called upon by my lawful
 Superiors to appease God Almighty's Anger for my own and others
 sins, by Fasting, Weeping, and Mourning. Hear not me, but the
 Holy Prophet, *Isa. ch. 22. v. 12, 13, 14.* And in that way did the
 Lord God of Hosts call to Weeping and to mourning, and to Baldness,
 and to Girding with Sack-cloth. And behold Joy and Gladness, slay-
 ing Oxen and killing Sheep, eating Flesh and drinking Wine: Let us
 eat and drink, for to morrow we shall dye. And it was revealed in mine
 Ears by the Lord of Hosts; surely this Iniquity shall not be purged
 from you till ye dye, saith the Lord God of Hosts. Now they seem not
 so

so much to be asleep as dead, who hear not God-Almighty crying out unto them, and calling them to Fasting, Weeping, and Mourning this Holy and Penitential time of Lent, after all the Authorities above-cited, for its Apostolical Institution. To say nothing of the abounding of all sorts of wickedness amongst us, and the heavy Spiritual Plagues of blindness of mind, and insensibility of Divine things which has seized upon us, and no doubt call aloud for Penitential Humiliations.

But if Abstinence from certain Meats upon a Religious account be true Christian Piety, what shall we say to S. Paul? Rom. 14. v. 2. *One believeth that he may eat all things; another who is weak eateth Herbs; and v. 6. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks, and v. 17. The Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink, but Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost.* So that it seems by the H. Apostle, that it matters not whether I eat Flesh, or I abstain from Flesh in Lent, so I give God thanks: I am every whit as good a Christian, though I eat, as if I abstained. Read the 14. v. and that will help you to correct your mistake. *I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of it self; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.* By which words, it's manifest the Romans case and ours is quite different. The scrupulous Romans seem to have had a difficulty to eat Flesh or drink Wine, as imagining them to be in themselves unclean, either for that they had been offered up to Idols, or prohibited by the abolished Law of Moses, or as naturally unclean, and necessarily inclining them to sin; but we abstain from them upon none of all these accounts, but judge them as clean in themselves as any other Creatures of God; only we deem them less suitable to a Penitential time than drier and less savory Viands, and smaller sorts of drink. But moreover, you must give me leave to tell you, that according to the doctrine of S. Paul in this very Chapter, you ought if you will walk Christianly, to abstain from Flesh in Lent, at least upon the account of not scandalizing your weak Brethren, who think themselves obliged to abstain from Flesh those days of Christian Penitence. Hear the Apostles own words, v. 15. *If thy Brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not Charitably,* and v. 21. *It is good neither to eat Flesh nor to drink Wine, nor any thing whereby thy Brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.* Though, as I was telling you, our case is quite different from the Christians at Rome, to whom S.

Paul.

Paul writes, We abstain from flesh in Lent, not as deeming it in it self unclean, as some scrupulous weaklings amongst them did; but having Testimonies from all Christian Countryes, and from the undoubted writings of the prime Pillars of Christianity, in the most Primitive Times, that the Apostles so ordained; and being besides commanded so to do by our Civil and Ecclesiastical Superiours, who are ordained of God to countenance Well doers, and to watch for our souls good, as they who must give an account, whom we think our selves obliged in Conscience to obey in all their Lawfull commands; but especially in such commands, which when sincerely and undeceitfully observed, tend to the great Spiritual advantage of our soul. There are other places commonly urged by mis-understanders of Holy Scriptures, against Abstinence from Meats upon a Religious account; but to any one that considers the whole context, and all circumstances, they evidently appear nothing to the purpose: For they are all intended against Superstitious Abstinence from Meats, either as unclean by Creation, or as unclean, because prohibited by the Antiquated Law of *Moses*, or as having been offered up to Idols, or as because eaten with unwashen hands against frivolous and useles Traditions of men. Thus when our B. Saviour, *S. Mat. 15. 11.* tells us, *Not that which goeth into the mouth, defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.* Its manifest by the occasion of his saying those words, *v. 2.* The Scribes and Pharisees quarrelling with his Disciples for, not washing their hands before they did eat Bread; and by what follows, *v. 20.* *To eat with unwashen hands, defiles not a man;* that he never intended by those words to signifie that we might upon a day or time of publick Humiliation, recommended to us by our Superiours, without defiling our selves, eat what we please, when we please, or as oft as we please.

But at least is it not against the Laws of the Land to abstain from certain Meats upon a Religious account? Here you must distinguish. To abstain from certain Meats upon a pretendedly Religious, but indeed Superstitious account, as if some Meats were less Holy, or more unclean than others, is both against God's Laws and Mans Laws; but to abstain from certain Meats, upon a truly Religious, and indeed pious account, as judging some Meats more suitable to Penitential days and seasons than others, is according both to the Laws of God and our Nation. Hear our Laws themselves, and be your own judges of the meaning of them. Statute 2. and 3. *Edward 6. c. 19.* *The Kings Subjects having a more clear light, and thereby perceiving that one Meat*

is not more holy, more pure, or more clean than another, and that no Meats can defile Christian Men, so that they be not used in Disobedience or Vice; yet for as much as divers of the Kings Subjects have of late time, more than in times past, broken and contemned such Abstinence, which hath been used in this Realm upon the Friday and Saturday, the Embring days, and other days commonly called Vigils, and in the time commonly called Lent, and other accustomed times, the Kings Majesty considering that due and Godly Abstinence is a means to Vertue, and to subdue mens Bodys to their Soul and Spirit; and considering also that Fishers, &c. doth Ordain and Enact with the Assent of the Lords Temporal and Spiritual, &c. That no person or persons, of what Estate, Degree, or Condition he or they be. shall at any time after the first day of May, 1549. willingly or unwittingly eat any manner of Flesh upon any Friday or Saturday, or the Ember day, or in any day in the time commonly called Lent. Take Bishop Gunninges Reflection hereupon. The scope and reason, and motive of which Law, if it be considered according to the principal end of it, subduing the Flesh to the Soul and Spirit (for there is added another end also which was political) may well admonish us (though it was hard to contain the particulars in a Law) to abstain also at such times of Mortification from whatsoever Food else is more delicate, costly, of hotter nature, and of higher nourishment. The formers of that Law (which is now the Law of our Land) had no doubt, before their eyes, the approbation of God, and his gracious answer to Dantel so Chastening himself, as in the holy Scripture is described, Dan. 10. 2. 3. 12. In those days, I Daniel, was Mourning three full weeks; I ate no pleasant Bread, neither came Flesh nor Wine in my mouth; neither did I annoynt my self at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. Then said he unto me, Fear not Daniel, for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thy self before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. Which that Ministers of Gods Word should not as well have before their eyes, as our civil Magistrates, is a great shame. Reflect also with him upon the Prayer for the first Sunday of Lent: O Lord, who for our sake didst Fast 40. days and 40. nights, give us Grace to use such Abstinence, that our Flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey thy Godly motions in Righteousness and true Holiness, &c. How unworthy it would be to make that Holy Prayer to bear such a sence as this, O Lord, who for our sakes didst Fast forty days and forty nights, give us Grace to use such Abstinence, that our Sea-faring Men and Marriners, and young Carle, and the like, may be maintained,

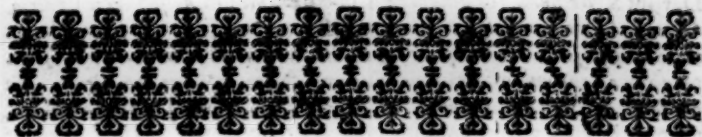
In fine, Abstinence from certain Meats upon certain days, is against no Law that I know of, but the Law of sin in our own sinful bodies, our corrupt greedy desire of eating what we will, when we will, and as much as we will. But still you say you are afraid of Will-worship and Superstition, by observing a time which you fear God has never commanded you. But you have more reason to be afraid of Profaneness in taking no notice of a time, which you have all reason to think God has commanded you Religiously to observe, if you reflect well upon what has been said. But you cannot persuade your self its any ways acceptable to God to Fast in Lent. For that you must know that the power of Education is upon you, and our proud corrupt Nature has a great deal of difficulty to condemn it self of so gross ignorance and mistake, that notwithstanding we have made Religion our business for perhaps twenty or thirty years, or more; yet we have looked upon a Practice as an useles, vain Superstition, which was indeed true Christian Piety. But its better to come into Gods Vineyard at the Eleventh hour than not at all. Better late than not at all come to the knowledge of any part of true Christian Piety. Learn to be Wise from your own dammage, and reflect seriously with your self how seldom you have Fasted in the whole course of your life, and yet you cannot but acknowledge the singular benefit of Religious Fasting; and if you believe Jesus Christ, when it is rightly performed, it shall have a singular reward in the other Life: And consider moreover, whether you shall in all likelihood Fast more days in this next year, if you Fast only when the Spirit of God shall move you to Fast, or if you should engage your self to Fast all *Fridays*, *Ember-days*, *Lent*, &c. God knows our private good purposes are easily broken by us, and the best of us stand in need of the extrinsecal help of a common Law to call upon us to do our duty, especially in such things as are troublesome to Flesh and Blood, as Fasting and Abstinence are. You are resolved for example, to Fast to morrow; a Friend comes in, and either invites himself to Dine with you, or you to Dine with him; and now its ten to one, but either out of modesty or human respect, you break your purpose of Fasting. But when a day is set apart for Fasting or Abstinence by a common Law, every one presumes his Neighbour observes it, and does not expect that for his sake he should Violate it. Fasting and Prayer are strangely useful to save our souls; and it concerns Superiors to secure some times for them in their Subjects, let them super-add what they please by their own private Devotions. And we find it but too true by too sad expe-

experience in too many, what the *German Lutheran* confessed to his Son. His Son refusing to eat upon a *Fasting-day*, he told him he was not to Fast upon *Fridays* or *Saturdays*, or any other Set-days; that was Superstition, but when the Spirit moved him: His Son demanding, I pray Father when did the Spirit move you to Fast, these thirty years you have been a *Lutheran*: He ingenuously confess, *By God niet een maal*; *By God not once*. And indeed it is a sad thing to consider in our poor Country how many Zelots there are amongst us for Religion, and yet how seldom or never at all they Fast. Nay, many of them, because they are loth to condemn their own practices, because the holy Scripture sometimes Allegorically calls Abstinence from sin Fasting, look upon Abstinence from Meat and Drink as no true Fast: As if they should say there were no such thing prohibited by God as Carnal Adultery and Fornication, because in a Spiritual and Allegorical sense Idolatry or a Worshipping of false Gods, is often called in Holy Writ Fornication and Adultery. But this is the just punishment of Pride and Self-conceit, God ever resisting the Proud, but giving Grace to the Humble; & deservedly do they fall into a thousand Spiritual Phrensies and Madneses, who prefer their own private seeming sense of H. Scriptures, not only before the judgment of their present Guides and Teachers, but also before the unanimous interpretation of the prime Christian Saints and Doctors of all Ages, whom God has appointed to preserve us, whilst we adhere to their solid Sentiments, from being carryed away with every wind of Doctrin of our own private Opinions.

Whom all that has been said cannot perswade to a Religious Observation of the Penitential time of Lent, I have one reasonable request to them, that they would but for one year Fast as many days out of private Devotion, as they do who *Fast* at Set-times and days commanded by an extrinfecal Authority; and I perswade my self, they would find so great spiritual benefit thereby, that they would clearly see, *Fasting* being good in it self, its being commanded by our Superiors, can never make it Superstition. I deny not but the change of the Primitive Christian way of *Fasting* into a meer mock-abstinence from certain kind of Meats, by Set-Fasters, gave but too great occasion to many simple well-meaning people, to look upon all Fasting as a meer Superstition: It being hard to conceive that ever the Apostles could appoint such a manner of Fasting as is too too commonly practised by Pretenders to follow Apostolical Institutions in their Set-Fasts. For what say Non-Conformists, if we must upon

the Authority of Primitive Fathers *Fast* Lent, why then ought we not to follow the manner of *Fasting* prescribed by the same Fathers? Now they recommend to us as well Abstinence from Wine as flesh, and only one temperate Refection towards the Evening. As for Answer to this Objection, we all acknowledge our fault, and are resolved seriously to endeavor amendment, and according to our Corporal and Spiritual strength piously to emulate the Primitive Christians *Fasting*: And would you joyn with us in so holy an exercise, we hope what our own simple knowledge is not able to prevail with our sensual Nature to do, your good example would shame us into the effectual performance of, at least in some good measure. And now I hope your Objection is Answered. And a happy solution this indeed God grant it. But its time to add a word concerning the Practical manner of Religious Fasting.

The



The Conclusion by way of a Practical direction how to Fast.

BUT now we are resolv'd to keep Lent, how may we keep it so as to do our bodys no hurt, and our souls a great deal of good?

We must remember God-Almighty loves a cheerful giver, and therefore whether we do more or less Mortification, this Sacred Penitential time, let us do it with a cheerful Heart and Countenance. And although there can be no doubt, but the more strictly we can prevail with our selves to *Fast*, we may hope for the more abundant benefit from our *Fasting*; yet we must consider the proportion not only of our Corporal, but also of our Spiritual forces; we must Mortifie our bodys but not Kill them; we must humble soul and body for our sins, but yet with such regard to our measure of Divine Grace and Spiritual strength, that we do not make our lives tedious and intolerably irksome. It was not want of Corporal but Spiritual strength which made our B. Lord excuse his weak Apostles from the rigorous *Fasts* of the Disciples of S. John Baptist and the *Pharisees*. The strong new Wine of *Fasting* put into such craz'd Bottles as they were, before they were strengthened with the Infusion of the H. Ghost upon the day of *Pentecost*, would have broken them all in pieces. We must indeed humble our selves this Penitential time for our unfaithful Service of the Divine Majesty, but yet so as we do not make our selves wholly weary of his Service. And when Penitential works seem grievous to our delicate frail bodys, we must encourage our selves to go on by reflecting, *Aut Penitendum aut ardensum*, we must either gently

ly Chastise our selves for our sins in this world, or else severely be for ever Chastized by God-Almighty for them in the other. And this will make us cry out amidst our most rigorous *Fasts*, with the Deyout S. Bernard. *O bonum judicium quod me divino subducit iudicio. O good, O welcome self-judgment which frees me from the severe judgment of my God. Pro eo quod, &c. Because we abstain even from lawful things, the unlawful things which we formerly have committed, are pardon'd us. &c. Idem. Ser. 4. de Quadrag.* If we judge our selves, we may be sure we shall not be judged of our Lord. The Justice of the All good God will not permit the same faults to be twice punished, by us in this Life, and by himself in the other.

But how must we Fast this Holy Time? In the first place we must have a special care to Fast from Sin. *Illa est in Quadragesima diebus, &c. This (says S. Austin) is no small benefit of the Lenten-Fast, that whilst at that time we even abstain from lawful things, we are vehemently admonished much more to avoid such things as are unlawful: For we, who abstain from flesh, which we may lawfully eat upon other days: We, who abstain from Wine, which we may lawfully drink moderately: We, who abstain from those things which sometimes are lawful, especially ought to abstain from Sin, which never is lawful. If therefore we desire well to Fast from Meat, in the first place let us Fast also from Vices, &c. otherwise we may justly fear that severe Reproach of Almighty-God, Isa. 1. to his own People the Jews, concerning days and observances of his own appointment, because Celebrated by persons living habitually in grievous sins: Who hath required this at your hand, to tread my Courts?.....Incense is an Abomination to me.....Your new-Moons, and your appointed Feasts; your Embers, Vigils, and Lent-Fasts my soul hateth, they are a trouble to me, I am weary to bear them. When you make many prayers, I will not hear, your hands are full of blood. Had not the Penitent Ninevites joyned with their Fasting and Sack-cloth amendment of their wicked lives, they had not escaped the Destruction threatned them from God Almighty, by his Prophet Jonah. Chap. 3. ver. 10. And God saw their Works, that they turned from their evil Way, and God repented of the Evil that he had said that he would do unto them, and he did it not. And indeed, what can be more absurd, and impiously prophane, than when we are professing to endeavour to appease God Almighty's Anger for our Sins, by Fasting and other Humiliations; then actually to incense him to Wrath and Indignation against us, by deliberately offending of him.*

Second-

Secondly, Have a special care you so Fast, as your Fasting be a real Mortification unto you, and not a mere Mock-Fast; A pure Abstinence from Flesh, and a real Feasting upon other Viands. Let us not deceive our selves; the God before whom we pretend to humble our selves is not mocked: He is the dangerouslest Person in the World to go about to cheat, and impose upon. And think seriously, what is the true End of our Superiors, in commanding us Fasting and Abstinence; and then order our Eating and Drinking, as we miss not of That. If it be to dispose us for Prayer and other Spiritual Exercises, to appease Gods Anger towards us for our Sins past, to weaken the Strength of Concupiscence enclining us to sin for the time to come, &c: be sure we do nothing on a Fasting-Day destructive of those Ends. We must look upon Fasting as the Physick of our Souls, prescribed to us by our Spiritual Doctors and Physicians, not purely to show their Authority, and exercise our Obedience; but as absolutely necessary for the recovery of our Spiritual Health, vvhich we have lost by Sin: And therefore, if any one should go about to dispense with you, as to the taking of this bitter Potion; before you admit of his Dispensation, ask him what Security he can give you, it shall go equally well with your Souls Health, whether you take the unfavory Potion of Fasting or no? *We fell sick (sayes S. Basil. Ho. 1. de Jeju.) by Sin, we are cured by Repentance. But Rep nance without Fasting is vain and unprofitable.* And to Fast from one sort of Viands, and Feast upon another; or to Fast from Meat, and what we want in Meat to make it up with strong Drink, is as good never a whit as never the better. And in such a manner to pretend to atone your offended God by Fasting, is as if you should make shew of humbling your self by wearing Sack-Cloath, and secretly line your Sack-cloath with Plush. And he who will regulate his Fasting by what Latitudinarian Guides and Directors tell him he may lawfully do upon a Fasting-day, without breach of his Fast, whereas his Blessed Saviour, whom he pretends to imitate, Fasting 40. Days and 40. Nights, was afterwards a hungry, he may Fast 40. Days and 40. Nights without e're being hungry, either in the time of his Mock-fast, or afterwards. And this I take to be the true-reason, why many complain they have kept many Lents with little or no profit to their souls, and with good reason, because they seldom or never really and

and indeed *Fasted*; but instead of endeavouring according to their strength to humble themselves by more and more rigorous Abstinence, they have sought by all means possible to cheat those Penitential days. Hear not me, but *S. Basil* above, concerning those, who because a five-days *Fast* was at hand, would make themselves drunk the day before. *Si cras venias vinum obolens, &c.* If thou comest to-morrow smelling of Wine and its purrid and corrupted Crudities, how shall I impute to thee thy drunken Surfet for a *Fast*. In which order shall I place thee? Amongst Drunkards, or amongst Fasters? But in what order think you would the Holy Father have placed those, who not barely smell of Wine drunk to excess the day before, but upon the very Fasting-day it self, dripp their skins full of Wine? Had we a deep sense how much the health of the soul is to be preferr'd before the pleasure of the body, and a strong Faith, how exceedingly Fasting conduces to the souls health, all the World would be in love with *Fasting*; and though our Constitutions would not permit us to abstain from flesh, this Love would wake us so ingenious to Mortifie our selves in a temperate use of flesh, that we should no less reap the fruit of *Fasting*, than those who lived upon Fish or Herbs. Let us by no means (says *S. Basil*) receive the days that are approaching with a sad heart, but as becomes Saints with a cheerful affection.--- Be not sad when thou art Cured. It would be very absurd if we should grieve for the substration of our *Vitnals*, and not rather rejoyce for the health of our soul; and so seem to value more the pleasure of our belly than the cure of our mind. For fulness causes delight unto the belly, but fasting is gainful to the soul. Rejoyce, for that is given thee an efficacious Medicine to abolish sin. For as Worms which breed in the bowels of Children are expelled by certain sharp and bitter Medicines, so Sin that abides in the inmost recesses of the soul, is instantly kill'd and extinguish'd by fasting, which purges the bowels of the mind.---- Do not imitate the disobedience of Eve; do not again make the Serpent thy Counsellor, who under pretext of sustaining thy body, persuades thee to eat. Do not excuse thy self for thy infirm Constitution; do not say thou art not able to endure fasting. For thou dost not make those excuses to me, but according to the Proverb, thou speakest to one who knows the Truth, to wit, to God, who is ignorant of nothing. Go to then, tell m^e, canst thou not Fast, and canst thou fill thy self with variety of Meats, canst thou surcharge thy body with the weight of *Vitnals*? But we know Physicians are wont to prescribe to such as are infirm not abundance of Food, but a spare Diet

Diet and Abstinence. How comes it to pass then that you can feast, but pretend you can not fast? Whether is it more easie to the belly to pass over the Night with a slender Refection, or to lye oppress'd with abundance of Meats? Yea, indeed not to lye, but stretching and groaning continually to turn, now to this side, and now to that? But what moderation in eating and drinking should we do well to use upon Fasting-days? Consult God and your own Conscience, and such as understand the right exercise and great benefit of true Fasting. In three words. Be contented with one temperate Meal taken as late as your health and other circumstances will permit. Drink no strong drink, or very sparingly, and this only at your Meal; and though you should take some small matter at night, Even such an abstinence would not want its singular Spiritual advantages, so you exercised it not merely in a Customary manner, but for good Christian ends, with sincerity as in the sight of God, according to the measure of your health and strength.

Thirdly: Be sure to joyn with the exterior Mortification of your body, the interior Humiliation of your soul by a hearty sorrow and contrition for your sins. Though you give your whole Estate to the Poor, if you want Charity, it will avail you nothing: And though you make your body a mere Skeleton, by rigorous Fasting and Abstinence, if your heart be not truly Penitent and sorry for your sins, all's to no purpose. A broken and an humble heart is a Sacrifice which God-Almighty will by no means despise: But if contrition of heart be wanting, all exterior Mortifications will be rejected. And it is want of this which makes Fasting and other voluntary Austerities and Involuntary Crosses seem hard and intolerable unto us. A soul deeply humbled with an intimate sense of its deserts for its manifold sins and wickednesses, thinks all Meats, all Cloaths, all Lodgings, and whatsoever Accommodations too good for it. But as exterior acts of Charity beget and encrease true Charity in our hearts, so exterior Penitential works are apt to beget and encrease interior Penitential sorrow in our souls. And though the interior of Charity, Repentance, and other Vertues be the chief and main thing we are to aim at, yet all interior pretences to any Vertue, which show not themselves in exterior acts, are to be suspected as Counterfeit. What St. Austin says of Charity, is no less true of Repentance, or any other Vertue. *Amor fides, &c. Love, if it be in us, it will be working; if it do not work, it is not in us; if it be great, it will work great things. Repentance, if*

it be in us, it will be working by Fasting, and other Penitential works; if it works not, it is not in us; if it be great, it will work great things. Christian Vertues with their exterior acts, are not unfully compared to some rich Wine in a Cask or Vessel. A rich Wine without a Cask or Vessel to contain it, cannot be presented; a bare Cask presented without the rich Liquor in it, would not be accepted, *Joel 2. 12.* Therefore also now saith the Lord, Turn ye even to me with all your heart, with Fasting, and with Weeping, and with Mourning.

Fourthly : Take heed of corrupting the Mortification of your Fasting by excess in other joyances. Holy Daniel in his three weeks Fast, abstained not only from pleasant Food, but also from Anoynting of himself, *Ch. 10. v. 3.* I ate no pleasant Bread, neither came Flesh nor Wine in my mouth; neither did I Anoynt myself at all, till three weeks were fulfilled.

*Viamur ergo parcius,
Verbis, cibis, & potibus,
Somno, jocis, & artibus
Perseemus in Custodia.*

Let us be more sparing, not only in our Meat and Drink, but also in our Words, Sleep, and Recreations, and keep a more Vigilant Watch over our selves, that in nothing we exceed. And the reason is manifest, for one great end of Fasting being by that exterior Mortification to beget or encrease interior Contrition and Sorrow of heart for sin, it manifestly follows, if we seriously design the end of Fasting, we ought carefully to moderate all other Joyances, however in themselves Lawful, and at another time laudable, which manifestly impede our designed end, least we pull down with one hand, what we go about to build up with the other, and make our Spirits as vain and light by frothy Conversations and other Divertisements, as we make them grave and sober by Fasting and Abstinence. Hear the 4th. Council of Toledo, c. 5. *In omnibus, &c.* In all the foresaid days of Lent we ought to insist on Fasting and Mourning, to cover the body with Hair-cloth and Ashes, to humble our mind with Mournings, to change our Joy into Heaviness, until the time of the Resurrection of Christ, when we are with joy to sing Alleluiah, and turn our heaviness into gladness. For this the consent of the Universal Church in all parts of the Earth hath confirmed.

Fifthly : Spend more time in Prayer, Meditation of Divine things, and Spiritual reading and hearing of Sermons; for one great end of Fasting is the better to dispose us for these Spiritual exercises. *Venter non habet aures*: The pampered paunch is to nothing deaser than to Divine Inspirations. *Impletus venter non vult studere libenter*. The full belly has no great mind to study, but much less to speak to God Almighty by devout Prayer, or to hear him speak to it by spiritual reading and hearing of Sermons. Thus the Antient people of God, the Jews, spent the fourth part of their days of publick Fasting and Atonement, in reading and hearing the Law of Almighty God, and another fourth part in worshipping the same God with devout prayers. *Nehem. 9. v. 1, 2, 3*. Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month, the Children of Israel were Assembled with Fasting, and with Sack-cloathes and Earth upon them. And the Seed of Israel separated themselves from all Strangers, and stood and confessed their Sins, and the Iniquities of their Fathers : And they stood up in their place, and read in the Book of the Law of the Lord their God, one fourth part of the day, and another fourth part they confessed and worshipped the Lord their God. And the Church of Christ has ever in Lent, to Prayers and Fastings, annexed more frequent hearing and Preaching God's Word; and many of S. *Crysostom's* Golden Homilies, as likewise of others of the Antient Fathers, were Sermons Preached day by day, in Lent, to the people. Hear S. *Crysostom*, upon those words of our Blessed Saviour, *This kind goes not out, but by Prayer and Fasting* : *Qui orat, &c.* He that prays with Fasting, hath two Wings, and those lighter than the Winds themselves; for such an one doth not stretch himself, or yawn, or is drowsie in his Prayer-----He that fasteth is light and winged, and prays with Vigilancy, and extinguishes his own evil Lusts, and renders God propitious to himself, and bumbles his own soul that was lift up. For this cause also the Apostles in a manner continually Fasted---Fasting with Faith, brings into the soul a great force, and much Philosophy, and makes of a man an Angel, and helps him to fight with incorporeal powers.

Sixthly : What we defraud our own Appetite of by Fasting, let our Lord Jesus eat by the mouth of his Poor. And this indeed is another end and fruit of Fasting, to make us more able and more willing to relieve those in necessity. To feel some hunger our selves sometimes, makes us more tenderly compassionate of those who in a manner are continually hungry; and its manifest, the less we expend on our selves, the more we have to bestow on the Needy and Indigent, and daily experience teaches us that none are more liberally Charitable.

ble to others; then those who are most Christianly severe to themselves. And no wonder, their frequent Abstinences demonstratively convincing them that the best use of wealth is, to spend as little as they can upon themselves, and as much as they can upon their necessitous Neighbors. And hence also follows another admirable fruit of Religious *Fasting*; to wit, an absolute indifferency to worldly riches and abundance. For who will break his Sleep, or weary his Limbs to get that, which he believes when he has gotten, the best use he can make of it, is to give it away to others. Hear the Antient and Learned *Origen*. Hom. 10. in *Levir. 16. Habemus, &c.* We have the days of Lent Consecrated to *Fastings*; we have the 4th, and 6th, days of the week, whereon we solemnly Fast.----There is also yet another Religious way of *Fasting*, whose praise is set forth in writing from certain of the Apostles; for we find in a certain Book, that it was said by the Apostles, Blessed is he who fasts also for that end, that he may relieve the Poor. This *Mans Fast* is much accepted with God. Hear *S. Chrysolog.* Serm. 8. de *Jejun. Eleemosyna, &c.* Alms and Prayers are the wings of *Fasting*, by which 'tis carried up to Heaven, without which it lies dead and spiritless upon the Earth. ---- Let us therefore, O my Brethren, when we Fast, deposit our Dinner in the hand of the Poor, that their hand may preserve for us what our belly would have lost us. ---- The hand of the Poor is the Treasury of Christ. ---- He that Fasts not to the Poor, doth but feign a Fast to God. ---- Fasting without works of mercy, is but an empty Image of Hunger. Without pity to others, 'tis but an occasion taken of Covetousness. Because by such sparing, what is taken down in the flesh, swells in the bag. In fine, hear God Almighty himself, *Isa. 58.* Is not this the Fast that I have chosen. ---- Is it not to deal thy Bread to the Hungry, and that thou bring the Poor that are cast out into thy house? When thou seest the Naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thy self from thine own flesh? And now would all Pretenders to fast in Lent, and upon other set-days, Fast in some tolerable manner, according to what right reason, Holy Scriptures, and Antient Fathers direct us, as has been shoven; the Devil himself would be ashamed to call such *Fasting* the Doctrine of *Demons*, Will-worship, or Superstition.

But to Fast truly and Christianly, is troublesome to flesh and blood. It cannot be denied. And this is indeed the true cause we have so many Pretences of Lent-Fast amongst us. The want of express Scriptures, and Fear of Superstition is pretended; but the true reason indeed, we so seldom Fast, is, the difficulty flesh and blood finds in *Fasting*.

CXXI

Fasting. But as to this, we must help our selves sometimes, by calling to mind the bitter eternal torments we have deserved for our sins; and this will make us ashamed to complain of the gentle Penitence of the most rigorous Lent-Fast. Had God-Almighty, upon the account of our manifold sins and wickednesses, required of us some great matter; for example, To have Fasted our whole Lives with Bread and Water, ought we not gladly to have done it? How much rather then ought we to comply most willingly with his most equitable and gentle command of Fasting moderately sometimes? How gladly would a Damned Soul accept of a *Methusalem's* Age of rigorous Fasting, and whatsoever most severe Mortifications in exchange for its intolerable eternal torments? And no less gladly and willingly ought we to do or suffer any thing never so troublesome to flesh and blood, to prevent our falling into the same state of immutable unsufferable misery. Often and seriously to think of this; to wit, that except we Repent with Fasting, Weeping and Mourning, we must Perish, and that eternally, would make the most rigorous severity seem gentle and easie. Otherwhiles let us call to mind the eternal joyful *Easter* a Religious devout Lent-Fast will end in. And this will make us cry out with the great *S. Paul*, *The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the future glory which shall be revealed in us.* Whatsoever we can suffer by Fasting, or whatsoever other Christian severity in this our time, upon this Earth, is light & easie, if compared with the immense weight of eternal glory, which expects us in the other Life. Courage therefore, O my soul. Sigh, Pray, and Fast; Heaven will make amends for all. *Si credis omnia patere, si non pateris non credis, &c.* O *Christian Man* (says the Divine *S. Crisostom*) *If thou believest, be willing to suffer all things; if thou art not willing to suffer, thou dost not believe; for such and so great things are promised us, that rather than fall short of them, we ought to suffer a thousand deaths; undoubtedly a few Lent-Fasts. Immortality, Glory, a Kingdom, an eternal Kingdom is proposed unto us. To which Kingdom, He, who to teach us the way to it, Fasted 40. days and 40. nights, bring all devout Imitators of his Quadragesimal Fast. Amen.*

F I N I S.

A Postscript.

If any one be offended at the proving of Lent to be an Apostolical Institution by the unanimous Tradition of all Christian Countrys, they are desired to Reflect, First, how they would Triumph, had they a like Tradition but even of one Country for a Non observance of Set-Fasts: And Secondly, how that all Christian Churches agree, that a Sacred Reverence is to be given to whatsoever Doctrins or Practices can be proved to be Apostolical, by a truly universal unanimous Tradition: But the dispute betwixt the Church of Rome and Church of England, is, whether certain Doctrins or Practices were indeed always, every where, by all, or in a manner by all Christian Doctors acknowledged as Apostolical: I say by all, or in a manner by all; for as Bishop Gunning well observes, p. 132. he would in a dangerous degree deserve our common Christianity, who would reject some Book of H. Scripture, the Epistles for example of S. James and S. Jude, or something for being a Tradition Apostolical, for the positive possible Rejection of some one Socrates, or other Ecclesiastical Writer, or some one or a few Fathers, against the known generality and consent of the rest of Antient Writers, and immemorial witness or practice of whole Christian Countrys. And the reason is manifest, especially in our present particular matter of Practice. Had the H. Apostles for example, in the several Countrys they Converted to Christianity, taught no such thing as Abstinence from certain Meats on Fasting-days, nor no Set-Fasts on Friday or Lent, but had positively taught, that to observe Solemn Set-Fasts, was Legal, as the Heretick Acrius, and that Abstinence from certain Meats was vain and unprofitable, as the Heretick Jovinian, according to S. Aug. l. de Ser. n. 35. & 82. That some one or a few pretenders to Christianity should either be ignorant what was taught them by the Apostles, or would wilfully teach otherwise than they had been taught, is no wonder, but that all the several Christian Countrys in the World should make a distinction of days and meats, and this ever since they were Christians, they positively unanimously attesting as much, and all their most antient Records partly positively witnessing the same, partly being silent as to any Innovation; and yet no such thing should be taught them, but rather the quite contrary by the first Planters of the Christian Faith amongst them, this is impossible. And whoever goes about to weaken the force of Universal Tradition rightly understood, invalidates as much as in him lyes all revealed Religion: It being impossible to know assuredly any Books, as to all that's contained in them, to be Divine Revelations, but by such a Tradition. Concerning this, see Bishop Gunning above.

Christo Jejuncti Gloria.

